

# COVID-19 CAREGIVER GUIDELINES

## ARE YOU CARING FOR A PATIENT WITH SYMPTOMATIC, LABORATORY-CONFIRMED COVID-19, OR UNDER INVESTIGATION FOR SUSPECTED COVID-19?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends the following steps be taken by caregivers in the home when caring for a patient with symptomatic, laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 or is under investigation for suspected COVID-19.

### CARING FOR THE PATIENT

**Make sure that you understand and can help the patient follow their healthcare provider's instructions for medication(s) and care.** You should help the patient with basic needs in the home and provide support for getting groceries, prescriptions, and other personal needs.



**Monitor the patient's symptoms.** If the patient's condition worsens, call his or her healthcare provider and tell them that the patient has laboratory-confirmed COVID-19. This will help the healthcare provider's office take steps to keep other people in the office or waiting room from getting infected. Ask the healthcare provider to call the local or state health department for additional guidance. If the patient has a medical emergency and you need to call 911, notify the dispatch personnel that the patient has, or is being evaluated for, COVID-19.

### FOR THE HOUSEHOLD

**Household members should stay in another room or be separated from the patient as much as possible.** Household members should use a separate bedroom and bathroom, if available.

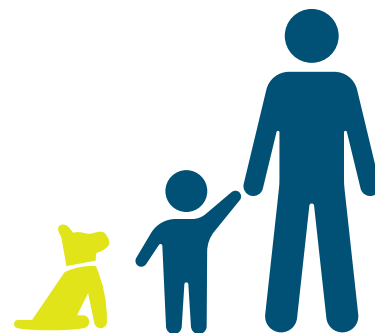
**Have the patient wear a cloth or disposable face mask** (one that covers the nose and mouth) when they are around people, including the caregiver. If the patient cannot wear a face mask, the caregiver should wear a face mask while in the same room with them. If the patient needs to be around others, such as within the home, in a vehicle, or in a doctor's office, the patient should wear a face mask that covers their mouth and nose.

**Prohibit visitors** who do not have an essential need to be in the home.

**Household members should care for any pets in the home.** Patient should not handle pets or other animals while sick.

**Make sure that shared spaces in the home have good air flow**, such as by an air conditioner or an opened window, weather permitting.

**Avoid sharing household items with the patient.** You should not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, bedding, or other items. After the patient uses these items, you should wash them thoroughly (see "Wash laundry thoroughly").



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases (NCIRD), Division of Viral Diseases. Information as of 4/08/2020.  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/prevention.html>

## TO PREVENT INFECTION



**Perform proper hand hygiene frequently.** Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains 60 to 95% alcohol, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry. Soap and water should be used preferentially if hands are visibly dirty.

**Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.**

**Have the patient wear a face mask that covers the mouth and nose when they are around other people, including the caregiver.** If the patient is not able to wear a face mask (for example, because it causes trouble breathing), you, as the caregiver, should wear a mask when you are in the same room as the patient.

**Wear a face mask and gloves** when you touch or have contact with the patient's blood, stool, or body fluids, such as saliva, sputum, nasal mucus, vomit, and urine.



■ **When using a disposable face mask:**

- » Throw out disposable face masks and gloves after using them. **Do not reuse.**
- » When removing personal protective equipment, first remove and dispose of gloves. Then, immediately clean your hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Next, remove and dispose of face mask, and immediately clean your hands again with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

■ **When using a non-disposable face mask:**

- » For non-disposable cloth face masks, like those made at home, the CDC recommends that the masks be routinely washed depending on the frequency of use. A washing machine should suffice in properly washing a cloth face mask.
- » When removing personal protective equipment, first remove and dispose of gloves. Then, immediately clean your hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Next, remove cloth face mask, follow washing guidelines (see "Wash laundry thoroughly"), and immediately clean your hands again with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

■ **Wear face masks properly.** Face coverings, like homemade cloth face masks, should:

- » Fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face
- » Be secured with ties or ear loops
- » Include multiple layers of fabric, if a cloth face mask
- » Allow for breathing without restriction
- » Be able, if a cloth face mask, to be laundered and machine dried without damage or change to shape

For more information on the use of homemade face masks to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and instructions on how to make them, please visit:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>

**Avoid sharing household items with the patient.** You should not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, bedding, or other items. After the patient uses these items, you should wash them thoroughly (see below "Wash laundry thoroughly").

**Clean all "high-touch" surfaces**, such as counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables, every day. Also, clean any surfaces that may have blood, stool, or body fluids on them.

- Use a household cleaning spray or wipe, according to the label instructions. Labels contain instructions for safe and effective use of the cleaning product, including precautions you should take when applying the product, such as wearing gloves and making sure you have good ventilation during use of the product.



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases (NCIRD), Division of Viral Diseases. Information as of 4/08/2020.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/prevention.html>

## TO PREVENT INFECTION (CONTINUED)



### Wash laundry thoroughly.

- Immediately remove and wash clothes or bedding that have blood, stool, or body fluids on them.
- Wear disposable gloves while handling soiled items and keep soiled items away from your body. Clean your hands (with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer) immediately after removing your gloves.
- Read and follow directions on labels of laundry or clothing items and detergent. In general, use a normal laundry detergent according to washing machine instructions and dry thoroughly using the warmest temperatures recommended on the clothing label.



**Place all used disposable face masks, gloves, and other contaminated items in a lined container before disposing of them with other household waste.** Clean your hands (with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer) immediately after handling these items. Soap and water should be used preferentially if hands are visibly dirty.

**Discuss any additional questions with your state or local health department or healthcare provider.** Check available hours when contacting your local health department.

**For more information visit:** <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-prevent-spread.html>

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases (NCIRD), Division of Viral Diseases. Information as of 4/08/2020.  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/prevention.html>

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