

Frequently Asked Questions for Patients with Confirmed or Suspected COVID-19 Receiving Home Care

This guidance applies to patients with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 who do not require hospitalization or were hospitalized and determined to be medically stable for home discharge

FAQ for Patients:

Do I need to stay in my home?

Yes, restrict activities outside of your home, except for getting medical care. Do not go to work, school, or public areas. Avoid using public transportation, ride-sharing, or taxis. Remain on home isolation for the duration recommended by your healthcare provider.

Do I need to separate myself from friends and family?

Yes. As much as possible, you should stay in a specific room and away from other people in your home. You should use a separate bathroom, if available. Ideally stay in a well-ventilated room, with an open window if the weather permits. Any shared rooms should be well-ventilated as well. If you are in the same room as others, try to maintain a distance of at least one meter (3 feet). It is especially important to completely avoid people with chronic illnesses, pregnant women, or people who are taking medications that suppress the immune system.

Do I need to separate myself from pets?

It is unknown if animals can transmit the virus. You should therefore restrict contact with pets and other animals while you are sick. If you do have contact with pets, wash your hands before and after the interaction and wear a facemask.

Should I wear a facemask?

Yes, you should wear a facemask (surgical) when you are around other people. If you are not able to wear a facemask (for example, because it causes trouble breathing), then people who live with you should not stay in the same room with you, or they should wear a facemask if they enter your room.

What type of facemask should I use?

You and your caregiver should use a tightly fitted disposable surgical mask that covers the mouth and nose. Masks should not be touched or handled during use. If the mask gets wet or dirty from secretions, it must be replaced immediately with a new clean, dry mask. Remove the mask using the appropriate technique – that is, do not touch the front, but instead

grasp ear loops and remove. Discard the mask immediately after use and wash your hands. Use of N95 respirators is not recommended!



What if I need to see a doctor?

Call ahead before visiting your doctor. If you have a medical appointment, call the healthcare provider and tell them that you have or may have COVID-19. This will help the healthcare provider's office take steps to keep other people from getting infected or exposed. Put on a facemask before you enter the facility. If you have a medical emergency and need to call 911, notify the dispatch personnel that you have, or are being evaluated for COVID-19. If possible, put on a facemask before emergency medical services arrive.

What is the best method for effective hand washing?

Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Alternatively, 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 instead of sanitizer if your hands are visibly dirty. It is preferable to use disposable paper towels to dry hands. If these are not available, use clean, dry cloth towels and replace them when they become damp from repeated use.

How do I help prevent transmission of the virus to my friends and family?

- Clean your hands often: see directions above
- Cover your coughs and sneezes: Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or the inside of your elbow when you cough or sneeze. Throw used tissues in a lined trash can; immediately wash your hands.
- Avoid sharing personal household items: Do not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, or bedding with other people or pets in your

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home. After using these items, they should be washed thoroughly with soap and water.

- Disinfect Surfaces daily: see directions below

How should I disinfect surfaces in my home?

Clean all “high-touch” surfaces everyday: light switches, counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables. Also, clean any surfaces that may have blood, stool, or body fluids on them. First, use a regular household cleaning soap or detergent. Then use a household disinfectant containing 0.5% sodium hypochlorite (i.e., equivalent to 5000 ppm or 1part bleach to 9 parts water). Refer to product instructions, use gloves if directed, and ensure adequate ventilation when cleaning.

How should I wash my clothes?

- Immediately remove and wash clothes or bedding that may have or has visible 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 immediately after removing your gloves.
- Use normal detergent and a high temperature setting if possible.

How should I dispose of gloves and masks (otherwise known as personal protective equipment)?

Place all used, disposable gloves, facemasks, and other contaminated items in a lined container before disposing of them with other household waste. Clean your hands immediately after handling these items.

What precautions should my caregiver take?

See the CDC link below, and refer to the following document: *BIDMC Prevention Steps for the Caregivers or Household Contacts of Patients with Confirmed or Suspected COVID-19 Receiving Home Care*

How long will I need to use these precautions?

At least until all of your symptoms have completely resolved. You should communicate with your health care provider before stopping the above precautions and what is the recommended duration of home isolation.

What if I have questions?

See the references below and contact your healthcare provider.

References:

Center for Disease Control and Prevention. *Interim Guidance for Preventing the Spread of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Homes and Residential Communities*. Updated 2/14/20. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-prevent-spread.html>

World Health Organization. *Home care for patients with suspected novel coronavirus (nCoV) infection presenting with mild symptoms and management of contacts*. Updated 2/4/20. [https://www.who.int/publications-detail/home-care-for-patients-with-suspected-novel-coronavirus-\(ncov\)-infection-presenting-with-mild-symptoms-and-management-of-contacts](https://www.who.int/publications-detail/home-care-for-patients-with-suspected-novel-coronavirus-(ncov)-infection-presenting-with-mild-symptoms-and-management-of-contacts)