

## Coronavirus (COVID 19) Basics

### What are coronaviruses?

- Coronaviruses are a large group of viruses that can cause illness in animals and humans. Some coronaviruses commonly circulate in the United States and usually cause upper respiratory symptoms such as cough or runny nose, although some can cause more serious illness. The 2019 novel (new) coronavirus causes the illness coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

### What is Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)?

- COVID-19 is a disease that was identified in late 2019 and was declared a pandemic on March 11. COVID-19 is an international and national public health emergency.

### Facts about COVID-19

- There are currently no vaccines for COVID-19 (possibly 12-18 months before we have an anti-virus)
- The virus is mutating and trying to adapt
- Symptoms of COVID-19 include:
  - Cough
  - Fever (99.1 or higher)
  - Some have shortness of breath
- 85-90% of patients have mild conditions
- 5% of cases escalate to a hospital setting
- You should not trust test results for COVID-19, as up to 30% of common flu tests are falsely negative
- It can be transferred from individuals who are asymptomatic
- 80% of cases do not demonstrate symptoms

It is recommended that you CALL a healthcare provider if you have any of these mild symptoms. You do not want to just go to the doctor, as you increase the possibility of spreading the virus.

### When to call 911 or take a family member or client to the ER

- Very hard to breathe

- Confused
- Looks like you are going to pass out
- Look sallow
- Tripoding (Leaning over on arms or elbows)
- Can't speak a sentence
- Blue lips

## How can I get COVID-19?

### COVID-19 is Spread in 3 Ways:

- Touching surface contaminated with the virus then touching your nose, mouth or eyes
- Someone coughs or sneezes within 6 feet of you
- Coming into close contact with an infected person like when caregiving  
(This includes contact with saliva, mucous, feces, vomit, urine, blood)

### Top 5 tips for caregivers in the age of coronavirus:

#### 1. Clean hands and keep short nails

When to perform: Before/after work, before/after eating and drinking, after going to bathroom, before/after providing care, before/after preparing food for care recipient, before/after using PPE, when in doubt, CLEAN YOUR HANDS!

How to perform: use soap and water and scrub for 20 seconds to kill coronavirus (COVID-19), use paper towel or tissue to turn of sink lever, open door-otherwise you re-contaminate your hands, use alcohol-based sanitizer as an alternative to soap and water, use same hand rubbing technique, rub hands together until sanitizer has dried on hands.

#### 2. Surfaces cleaned and disinfected

-If you touch contaminated surfaces and then touch your nose, eyes, and mouth you can get the disease.

-Doorknobs, phones, counters, eye glasses, fridges, microwaves, computers, and things that are touched often should be cleaned frequently with an EPA approved disinfectant (make sure to follow the directions on the bottle of disinfectant that you choose).

#### 3. Cover your coughs and sneezes

-Use a tissue to cover cough, blow nose and sneeze (make sure to discard after use, not in your pocket or purse).

-If you do not have a tissue, sneeze or cough into the inside of your elbow.

#### 4. Don't touch your face

-Did you know that people touch their face on average 23 times per hour? If your hands are contaminated with COVID-19 and you touch your face, you may introduce it to your eyes, nose and mouth.

#### 5. Practice social distancing-6 feet!

-Social distancing means you stay at least 6 feet away from others unless you live with them or are caring for them.

-The 6-foot rule should be applied in caregiving settings too, whenever possible (many caregiving duties can be done from a distance).

## **Protecting yourself and others from Coronavirus (COVID-19)**

### **What do social distancing, quarantining, and shelter in place mean?**

**Social Distancing-** means to stay at least 6 feet away from other people (other than family/caregiving clients).

- This should be done at grocery stores, pharmacies, ect.
- Stay at home as much as possible.
- Postpone appointments if possible.

**Self-quarantine-** means to **stay home** because you are having COVID-19 symptoms or are worried about transmitting it.

-People who are self-quarantining should:

- Stay home
- Not allow visitors
- Separate yourself from others in your home
- Stay in a specific room way from others in your home as much as possible
- Stay away from people who are 65 years or older or have chronic diseases because they are at high risk
- Use a separate bathroom if available
- Do not prepare food to serve to others
- Avoid caring for children and pets if possible

**Shelter in place-** means to stay home unless you are an essential worker or doing a life task because the disease is very widespread.

- An example is if the governor of the state says the state is on lockdown, aside from essential services.
- Essential life tasks examples are going to the grocery store and pharmacy.
- As a caregiver, you are considered an essential worker (essential workers still go to work during a shelter in place).

## Essential Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) + Hand Hygiene Advice During COVID-19 Pandemic

\*\* Guidelines are continually changing, please make sure to stay up to date on the latest information\*\*\*

Last updated | April 6, 2020

### What PPE Should Caregiver Wear

Care Recipient Health Status	Health Status	Precaution Class	Gloves	Mask	Goggles	Gown
	Healthy	⚠	Yes	<a href="#">Cloth Face Mask</a>	Not Required	Not Required
	Respiratory Illness (e.g. coughing)	⚠ 🔥 🖐	Yes	Face Mask*	Yes	Optional**
	Quarantined (e.g. had exposure to someone diagnosed with COVID-19)	⚠ 🔥 🖐	Yes	Face Mask*	Yes	Optional**
	Diagnosed COVID-19	⚠ 🔥 🖐	Yes	Face Mask*	Yes	Optional**
	During and after nebulizer/intubation treatment	⚠ 🔥 🖐	Yes	N95 Face Mask*	Yes	Yes


⚠ = Standard Precautions  
 🔥 = Transmission Based: Droplet Precautions  
 🖐 = Transmission Based: Contact Precautions  
 \*Ask Care Recipient to wear a Face Mask, in addition to Caregiver  
 \*\*[LA County Public Health](#) recommends home care workers consider using a gown if they are planning to perform a task that will result in splashing, like bathing.

#### PPE Alternatives

- These alternatives are last resort. Only use if the proper PPE is not required.
- Must clean and disinfect after each use. If you use and remove, do not put back on without cleaning and disinfecting
  - Gloves Alternative: Kitchen or Garden Gloves
  - [Mask Alternative](#): Scarf, Bandana, or Cloth
  - Goggles Alternative: Safety Glasses or Swim Goggles
  - Gown Alternative: Plastic Apron or Plastic Garbage Bags

#### PPE Posters to Print and Post

[Droplet Precautions](#)  
[Contact Precautions](#)



- The CDC now recommends anyone going out of their own home to wear a cloth covering over their nose and mouth.
- Ideally, put your mask on before you go into the same room as the person you are caring for.

- It is not recommended that those receiving care wear a face mask unless you think they will expose others like in a nursing home setting (example: they have a cough or fever).
- If you do not have a mask, use bandana or scarf, but launder if soiled and at least once a day (it is important to use something to block large particles from getting in your mouth, nose and eyes).
- DO NOT use a mask with individuals if it makes it difficult for them to breathe.
- Dispose of individual's face mask after eating, drinking, or taking mask off.
- Do not reuse disposable face masks.

## Help the Person You are Caring for Stay Safe

- Help keep hands clean
  - Before/after they eat
  - After they use the bathroom
  - Before/After they perform any personal care
  - After they cough, sneeze, blow their nose
  - After they touch surfaces that others have used
- Encourage to stay home if 65+ or at risk with heart, lung disease, asthma
- Avoid any visits and absolutely avoid visits from young children (e.g. grandchildren)

### Common mistakes when using PPE:

1. Using PPE when you don't need to.
  - There is a severe shortage so always follow guidelines.
2. Not putting equipment on correctly.
  - Techniques should be followed to protect yourself and others.
3. Not taking PPE off correctly.
  - Things like tucking your mask under your chin to eat allows your mask to become contaminated.
  - When removing gloves and mask:** remove and dispose your gloves first and then immediately wash your hands or use a sanitizer, then carefully remove your face mask and dispose it and wash your hands or use a sanitizer.
4. Not discarding PPE into a lined waste bin.
  - All used PPE and tissue should be disposed in a lined waste bin.

\*\*\*Knowing the proper use of PPE is critical in controlling and reducing the spread of the infection.

## SEQUENCE FOR PUTTING ON PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

The type of PPE used will vary based on the level of precautions required, such as standard and contact, droplet or airborne infection isolation precautions. The procedure for putting on and removing PPE should be tailored to the specific type of PPE.

### 1. GOWN

- Fully cover torso from neck to knees, arms to end of wrists, and wrap around the back
- Fasten in back of neck and waist



### 2. MASK OR RESPIRATOR

- Secure ties or elastic bands at middle of head and neck
- Fit flexible band to nose bridge
- Fit snug to face and below chin
- Fit-check respirator



### 3. GOGGLES OR FACE SHIELD

- Place over face and eyes and adjust to fit



### 4. GLOVES

- Extend to cover wrist of isolation gown



## USE SAFE WORK PRACTICES TO PROTECT YOURSELF AND LIMIT THE SPREAD OF CONTAMINATION

- Keep hands away from face
- Limit surfaces touched
- Change gloves when torn or heavily contaminated
- Perform hand hygiene



## **Additional hand hygiene information:**

### **Perform hand hygiene after coming in contact with:**

- Blood or body fluids (tears, sputum, vomitus, saliva, urine, feces, vaginal secretions, semen, and more)
- Non-intact skin
- Mucous membranes
- Eyes, nose, mouth, hair
- Genital or rectal areas

### **Perform hand hygiene after:**

- Blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing
- Handling garbage or other wastes
- Using the bathroom
- Handling any pet or pet items
- Smoking

### **Perform hand hygiene both before and after:**

- All contact with individual
- Contact with dirty clothes or linens
- Assisting with toileting
- Changing adult briefs

### **Assist individual with hand hygiene after:**

- Touching their bed or other furniture
- Blowing their nose, coughing, or sneezing
- Toileting

## **Don't Bring Coronavirus (COVID-19) Home: What should I do after my shift?**

1. Bring as few personal items as possible to work (only what you need).
2. Store work shoes in a plastic bag outside of home (In car or garage).
3. When you get home, take off your clothes immediately and launder.
4. Take a hot shower.

## **Caring for the elderly and at risk**

### **Who is most at risk for getting or dying from the coronavirus (COVID-19)?**

- People 65 and older
  - Anyone with underlying health conditions
  - Those with compromised immune systems
- This does NOT mean if you are young that you cannot end up in the ICU, it just means that you are less likely to die.

**How to protect elderly and people at risk:**

- Explain to them that you want them around long-term
- Be direct with patients and loved ones over 65
- Have someone else do their essential tasks outside of the home
- Do bulk buying and try to shop every two weeks
- Let them know that it is okay to rely on others
- Be overly cautious
- 65+ should avoid their grandchildren

**If an elderly or at-risk person must leave the home be sure to help person:**

- Use hand sanitizer if possible when out after touching door handles, pens, other surfaces
- Maintain 6 feet distance from other people
- Not touch face
- Sanitize any personal items when you return home including eyeglasses

**What should I remember when bathing, toileting, cooking, and feeding practices?**

Tips:

- 1) Always wash your hands before preparing meals
- 2) Never forget to wear your PPE when assisting with feeding
- 3) Wear gloves when cleaning dishes and wash hands after removing gloves
- 4) Consider giving a bed bath to those with respiratory symptoms (like coughing) to avoid splashing, which can transmit diseases. (wear a gown if available)
- 5) ALWAYS close the lid to the toilet to avoid splashing  
-This is VERY important because COVID-19 is believed to be spread through feces

**What should I remember/change during laundry practices?**

Tips:

1. Wash all items when soiled
2. Wash homemade face masks like bandanas or scarves after you remove
3. Wear disposable gloves when handling dirty laundry and discard after use
4. Hold laundry away from your body if possible and do not shake
5. Use the warmest settings possible for items being laundered
6. Wash your hands immediately after you remove your gloves
7. Remember to clean and disinfect laundry basket

**Should I get stocked up on extra foods and medicines?**

- You should stock up on prescription refills, food and house supplies (2 weeks to 2 months' worth)
- You should also have fever control medication on hand  
-Based on current information, ibuprofen has NOT been found to make COVID-19 symptoms worse.



## Cleaning Surfaces

### What surfaces should I clean and what solution kills coronavirus (COVID-19)?

#### Facts about surfaces and COVID-19

- A recent study found that the COVID-19 coronavirus can survive up to four hours on copper, up to 24 hours on cardboard, and up to two to three days on plastic and stainless steel.
- It is believed that surfaces are one of the primary ways that COVID-19 is spread
- Majority of transfer is from individuals with NO symptoms.
- Surfaces such as knobs, switches, sink handles, toilet handles, phones, tablets, coffee maker, washer/dryer buttons, hard surfaced floors and other commonly used devices should be disinfected at least daily

#### What should be used to disinfect surface?

- Bleach, peroxide, alcohol solutions and any EPA registered household disinfectant (Mixing bleach with other cleaners or vinegar is VERY dangerous)
- The following website lists all products on the list that meet EPA's criteria for use against SARS-COV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19:  
<https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>
- Make sure to clean dirty surfaces with soap and water first to remove germs and then disinfect to kill any germs that remain.

#### Tips for shopping

- Wipe down your cart
- Commit to what you are buying (don't touch it and then put it back)
- Don't shop if you have any COVID-19 symptoms
- Don't let loved ones or clients over 65 do the shopping
- Plan what you will buy for 2 weeks to minimize trips (get two weeks' worth of goods)

#### Tips when bringing in groceries

- Wash hands before and after handling groceries
- Sanitize your table/workspace (one side will be cleaned items)
- Scrub plastic
- Spray down hearty/thick packaging and jars
- Chips can be dumped in containers or wiped off
- Fruit and veggies should be washed in soapy water for 20 seconds
- Pull out cereal bags and things that do not need outside packaging

## **If You Get Sick and Getting Updates**

### **What if I am sick but have to provide care anyway?**

- If you are sick, STAY HOME
- There is no such thing as sick enough right now
- Make sure to call your provider instead of just going in

### **If you are sick and living with the person you are caring for:**

- Minimize the time spent with the person you are caring for
- Use separate bathrooms/bedrooms when available
- Wear a mask and ask the person you are caring for to wear a mask
- Avoid sharing personal household items such as dishes, bedding, towels, glasses, bedding, etcetera
- Clean and disinfect highly used items

### **How can I stay up to date as things change?**

- CDC
- World Health Organization
- Your local health authority/department
- Government Websites

The information for this training was sourced from NextStep National COVID-Ready Caregiver Certification.