

# COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Safety at Home: Health Care Worker Tips within the Shared Living Space

**Please note:** Based on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), these are recommendations for safeguarding non-infected persons when another member within a household is experiencing an active Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) infection. The guidelines may help health care workers, who are not symptomatic, but exposed to active COVID-19 infection at work, protect their families and those who live within the home.

Infection control principles used in health care settings also apply in the home care setting. Due to practical limitations, there are some differences between what can be done in the home versus health care setting. All precautions cannot be practiced completely outside of fully controlled settings such as health care facilities. Since COVID-19 is most likely transmitted through contact and droplet spread, the use of modified precautions that focus on preventing droplet and contact spread are recommended in the household setting.

One infection prevention and control activity that translates to all settings is to clean your hands often. Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

## Know How It Spreads

- COVID-19 spreads mainly from person-to-person close contact through respiratory droplets.
- Droplets are produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks and land in mouths or noses of people who are nearby. They are then inhaled into the lungs.
- Studies suggest COVID-19 may be spread by people who are not showing symptoms. You could spread COVID-19 to others even if you do not feel sick.
- Household members and other close contacts of exposed health care workers should be vigilant for emerging symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath).
- If household contacts develop fever or respiratory symptoms contact your physician for care.
- Unexposed persons who do not have an essential need to be in the home should not visit.
- All persons in the household should carefully follow recommendations for hand hygiene.

## Avoid Close Contact

- The best way to prevent illness is to **avoid being exposed to this virus** (or exposing others).
- Put distance between yourself and others. Avoid close contact (within six feet).
- Cover your mouth and nose with a cloth face cover when around others. The cloth face cover is meant to protect other people in case you are infected or exposed to those who are.
- If you are in a private setting and do not have on your cloth face covering, remember to always cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow.
- Throw used tissues in the trash.
- Immediately **wash your hands** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, clean your hands with a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

## Clean and Disinfect

- Clean and disinfect all areas used by the person who has been exposed, such as offices, bathrooms, common areas, shared electronic equipment like tablets, touch screens, keyboards, remote controls.
- Consider putting a wipeable cover on electronics.
- Disinfect with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-registered household product\* that meet EPA's criteria for use against COVID-19.

\*Note: This list is not all inclusive: Lysol Neutra Air® 2 in 1, Lysol® Brand All Purpose Cleaner, Lysol Brand Deodorizing Disinfectant Cleaner, Lysol® Kitchen Pro Antibacterial Cleaner, Ultra Clorox Brand Regular Bleach, CPPC Ultra Bleach 2.

- Follow manufacturer's instruction for cleaning and disinfecting. If no guidance, use alcohol-based wipes or sprays containing at least 70% alcohol.
- Dry surface thoroughly to avoid pooling of liquid.
- Clean high touch surfaces using soap and water. Practice routine cleaning of frequently touched surfaces. (Tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, sinks, etc).

## Laundry

- Launder items according to the manufacturer's instructions. Use the warmest appropriate water setting and dry items completely.
- Wear disposable gloves for handling dirty work clothes worn by the health care worker when exposed to sick patients.
- Dirty laundry from a health care worker can be washed with other people's items.
- Do not shake dirty laundry. This will minimize the possibility of dispersing virus through the air.
- Clean and disinfect clothes hampers using the guidance above for surfaces. Consider a disposable or washable liner.
- Remove gloves, and wash hands right away.

## Bedroom and Bathroom

- Keep separate bedroom and bathroom for a person who has been exposed at work (if possible).
- The person who has been exposed should stay separated from other people in the home (as much as possible).
- If shared bathroom: The person who is exposed should clean and disinfect the restroom after each use. If not possible, person who cleans should wait as long as possible before cleaning.
- Clean hands after taking off gloves or handling used items.
- For soft surfaces such as carpeted floor, rugs, and drapes- clean using soap and water or cleaners appropriate for use on surfaces.
- Use dedicated, lined trash can for the restroom.
- Use gloves when handling and disposing of trash.
- **Wash your hands often** with soap and water for 20 seconds after each cleaning or when visibly soiled.
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## Disinfectant Solutions

- Use precautions such as wearing gloves and ensuring good ventilation during product use.
- Use diluted household bleach solutions if appropriate for the surface.
- Unexpired household bleach is effective against coronaviruses when properly diluted.
- Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser.
- Leave solution on the surface for at least one minute.
- Make a bleach solution: 5 Tablespoons (1/3 cup) bleach/gallon of water or 4 teaspoons bleach/quart of water
- Trash- dedicated, lined trash can: If possible, dedicate a lined trash can for the person who has been exposed. Use gloves when removing garbage bags, and handling and disposing of trash. Wash hands afterwards.

## Resources

- <https://www.cdc.gov/>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/sars/guidance/i-infection/patients-home.html>
- [https://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/hcp/ppe-training/n95respirator\\_gown/doffing\\_06.html](https://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/hcp/ppe-training/n95respirator_gown/doffing_06.html)
- <https://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/healthcare-us/ppe/guidance.html>
- [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cleaning-disinfection.html?CDC\\_AA\\_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fprepare%2Fcleaning-disinfection.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cleaning-disinfection.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fprepare%2Fcleaning-disinfection.html)
- <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/disinfecting-your-home.pdf>
- [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cleaning-disinfection.html?CDC\\_AA\\_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fprepare%2Fcleaning-disinfection.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cleaning-disinfection.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fprepare%2Fcleaning-disinfection.html)
- <https://www.cdc.gov/sars/guidance/i-infection/patients-home.html>