



North Carolina Division of Public Health Interim 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) Home Care Interim Recommendations for Patients with Suspected or Confirmed 2019-nCoV Infection

January 27, 2020

Patients confirmed to have, or being evaluated for, 2019-nCoV infection may be cared for at home based on public health and medical evaluation. Prior to a healthcare facility, healthcare provider, or public health professional approving home care, the following steps should be taken:

Pre-requisites for home care:

- 1. Healthcare provider / local health department conduct remote telephone assessment to assure residential setting is appropriate for patient to self-isolate:**
 - A. Establish suitability of residential setting for home care self-isolation:
 - Separate room/living space** (away from others in the home) with access to bathroom and kitchen facilities
 - Patient is able to **adhere to recommended precautions** (see included recommendations)
 - If patient is unable to perform self-care, another **identified caregiver** is available
 - Caregiver should be capable of performing all tasks listed in caregiver guidance, provided on pages 3-4.
 - Caregivers should not themselves be elderly or have compromised immune systems or chronic health conditions (e.g., chronic heart, lung, or kidney conditions, diabetes, or cancer) that would cause them to be considered high risk for complications if they were to get sick.
- 2. Develop communication plan with the local health department**
 - A. Establish method of communication with healthcare provider and local health department until the patient fully recovers or has negative 2019-nCoV testing
 - B. **Notify and local health department** immediately of any change in the patients' clinical status
- 3. Educate patients and caregivers on the recommendations for home care infection prevention for 2019-nCoV**
 - A. See included documents for infection prevention recommendations for 2019-nCoV patients (page 2) and caregivers (pages 3-4).
 - B. View the CDC's home care recommendations:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/guidance-home-care.html>

Infection prevention recommendations for individuals confirmed to have, or being evaluated for, 2019-nCoV infection who receive care at home

Individuals who are confirmed to have or are under evaluation for 2019-nCoV should follow the prevention steps below until a healthcare provider or local or state health department says they can return to normal activities.

Stay home except to get medical care

You should restrict activities outside your home, except for getting medical care. Do not go to work, school, or public areas, and do not use public transportation or taxis.

Call ahead before visiting your doctor

Before your medical appointment, call the healthcare provider and tell them that you have, or are being evaluated for, 2019-nCoV infection. This will help the healthcare provider's office take steps to keep other people from getting infected.

Monitor your symptoms

Seek prompt medical attention if your illness is worsening (e.g., difficulty breathing). **Before** going to your medical appointment, call the healthcare provider and tell them that you have, or are being evaluated for, 2019-nCoV infection. This will help the healthcare provider's office take steps to keep other people from getting infected. Ask your healthcare provider to call the local or state health department.

Wear a facemask

You should wear a facemask when you are in the same room with other people and when you visit a healthcare provider. If you cannot wear a facemask, the people who live with you should wear one while they are in the same room with you.

Separate yourself from other people in your home

As much as possible, you should stay in a different room from other people in your home. Also, you should use a separate bathroom, if available.

Avoid sharing household items

You should not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, bedding, or other items with other people in your home. After using these items, you should wash them thoroughly with soap and water.

Cover your coughs and sneezes

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, or you can cough or sneeze into your sleeve. Throw used tissues in a lined trash can, and immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

Wash your hands

Wash your hands often and thoroughly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. You can use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available and if your hands are not visibly dirty. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

Prevention steps for caregivers and household members of patients confirmed to have, or being evaluated for, 2019-nCoV infection and being cared for in the home

If you live with, or provide care at home for, a person confirmed to have, or being evaluated for, 2019-nCoV infection please follow these guidelines to prevent infection:

Follow healthcare provider's instructions

Make sure that you understand and can help the patient follow any healthcare provider instructions for all care.

Provide for the patient's basic needs

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 they are getting sicker, call his or her medical provider and tell them that the patient has, or is being evaluated for 2019-nCoV infection. This will help the healthcare provider's office take steps to keep other people from getting infected. Ask the healthcare provider to call the local or state health department.

Limit the number of people who have contact with the patient

- If possible, have **only one caregiver** for the patient.
- Other household members should stay in another home or place of residence. If this is not possible, they should stay in another room, or be separated from the patient as much as possible. Use a separate bathroom, if available.
- Restrict visitors** who do not have an essential need to be in the home.

Keep elderly, very young, and other sick people away from the patient

Keep elderly people, very young children, and those who have compromised immune systems or chronic health conditions away from the patient. This includes people with chronic heart, lung, or kidney conditions, diabetes, and cancer.

Ensure good ventilation

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

Wash your hands often

- Wash your hands often and thoroughly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.** You can use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available and if your hands are not visibly dirty.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Use disposable paper towels** to dry your hands. If not available, use dedicated cloth towels and replace them when they become wet.

Wear a facemask and gloves

- Wear a disposable facemask and gloves** when you touch or have contact with the patient's blood, body fluids and/or secretions, such as sweat, saliva, sputum, nasal mucus, vomit, urine, or feces. Ensure the mask fits tightly, and do not touch it during use.
- Throw out disposable facemasks and gloves after using them. **Do not reuse.**
- Wash your hands immediately** after removing your facemask, gown, and gloves.
- Place all used disposable gloves and facemasks and other waste in a lined container before disposing them with other household waste. Wash your hands immediately after handling these items.

Do not share dishes, glasses, or other household items with the patient

- Avoid sharing household items. You should not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, bedding, or other items with a patient who is confirmed to have, or being evaluated for, 2019-nCoV infection.
- After the patient uses these items, you should wash them thoroughly with soap and water.

Wash laundry thoroughly.

- Immediately remove and wash clothes or bedding that have blood, body fluids and/or secretions, or excretions, such as sweat, saliva, sputum, nasal mucus, vomit, urine, or feces, on them.
- Wear gloves** when handling laundry from the patient.
- Read and follow directions on labels of laundry or clothing items and detergent. In general, wash and dry with the warmest temperatures recommended on the clothing label.

Clean areas the patient has used often

- 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, body fluids and/or secretions or excretions on them.
- Wear gloves** when cleaning surfaces the patient has come in contact with.
- Read labels of cleaning products and follow recommendations provided on product labels. 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 or eye protection and making sure you have good ventilation during use of the product.
- Use a **diluted bleach solution** or a household disinfectant with a label that says "**EPA-approved**" for **coronaviruses**. To make a bleach solution at home, add 1 tablespoon of bleach to 1 quart (4 cups) of water. For a larger supply, add ¼ cup of bleach to 1 gallon (16 cups) of water.

Monitor yourself for signs and symptoms of illness

Caregivers and household members are considered "close contacts" and should monitor their health. Follow the monitoring steps for close contacts listed on the symptom monitoring form.

- If you have additional questions, contact your local health department or call the epidemiologist on call at 919-733-3419.
- This guidance is subject to change. For the most up to date guidance from CDC, please refer to their website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/guidance-home-care.html>