Guidance for Large or Extended Families Living in the Same Home

Everyone is at risk for getting coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) if they are exposed to the virus. Older adults and people of any age who have a serious underlying medical condition are at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19. Find more information on who is at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19 at http://bit.ly/covid19_increasedrisk.

If you or someone in your household is at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19, then all family members should act as if they are at increased risk. This can be difficult if space is limited for large or extended families living together. While avoiding close contact with others and isolating someone who is sick can feel lonely, these actions are necessary to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and protect yourself and your household.

This document explains how to:

- Protect family members when you leave the house

- Protect family members at increased risk for severe illness

- Keep children healthy

- Isolate a sick family member

- Care for a sick family member

- Provide food when someone is sick

- Quarantine when exposed to someone who is sick

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CS 316538   12/21/2020

How to protect family members and others when you leave the house

If you or someone in your household is at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19, then all family members should act as if they are at increased risk. Choose one or two family members who are not at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19 to do necessary errands. Consider following additional prevention measures, such as wearing a mask, keeping social distance, washing your hands often, and increasing ventilation, when at home around household members who are at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19. **Here are some tips for these family members when they leave the house for errands:**

1. **Keep these items with you when leaving the house:** a mask, tissues, and hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.

2. **Cover your mouth and nose with a mask when around people who don't live in your household.** Masks should be washed if they get dirty or wet, or at least daily. It is important to always remove masks correctly and wash your hands after handling or touching a used mask. Learn more about the use of masks at https://bit.ly/covid19_masks.

3. **Keep social distance.** Stay at least 2 meters or 6 feet (about 2 arm lengths) from other people.

4. **Wash your hands often 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**. Always remember to wash your hands immediately after returning to your house. Learn more about washing hands at https://bit.ly/covid19_washhands.

5. **Avoid touching frequently touched surfaces in public areas, such as elevator buttons and handrails.** Avoid touching your face (eyes, nose, mouth) or mask until you wash your hands or use hand sanitizer.

6. **If you use public transportation, follow these tips:**
   » Wear a mask.
   » Maintain at least 2 meters or 6 feet (about 2 arm lengths) of distance from other passengers as much as possible.
   » Avoid touching commonly touched surfaces, such as handrails, as much as possible.
   » Wash your hands with soap and water, or use hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol as soon as possible after leaving public transportation.

7. **Don't ride in a car with members of different households. If you need to ride in a car with others, follow these tips:**
   » Wear a mask.
   » Open windows or use car ventilation to bring in fresh air.
   » Avoid touching surfaces as much as possible.
   » Limit the number of passengers in the vehicle and spread out as much as possible.
   » Wash your hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol after leaving the vehicle.
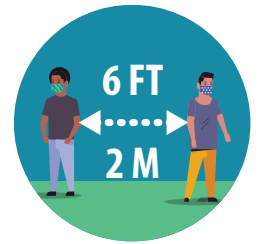
You can find more information about reducing risk when running essential errands at http://bit.ly/covid19_errands.

How to protect family members at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19

If someone in your household is an older adult or has certain underlying medical conditions, then all family members should act as if they are at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19. Find more information on who is at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19 at http://bit.ly/covid19_increasedrisk. **Follow these tips to protect family members:**

1. **Stay home as much as possible.**

2. **Keep social distance.** Stay at least 2 meters or 6 feet (about 2 arm lengths) apart from others.

3. **Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds,** especially after you have been in a public place or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

4. **Don't touch your eyes, nose, mouth or mask with unclean hands.** Clean your hands immediately after touching your face (eyes, nose, mouth) or mask with soap and water or hand sanitizer.

5. **Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or use the inside of your elbow. Throw used tissues in the trash and immediately wash your hands.**

6. **Clean frequently touched surfaces and any shared items between use** like tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, toilets, faucets, and sinks with soap and water. Then, use a household cleaner to disinfect (kill germs) the surface. Wear gloves, if possible, when cleaning and disinfecting with a commercially available or homemade household cleaner or disinfectant. Follow the cleaner or disinfectant label directions for use. More about cleaning and disinfecting can be found here: http://bit.ly/covid19_clean.

7. **Make sure the household has good air flow.** Open a window and turn on a fan to bring in and circulate fresh air if it is safe and practical to do so.

8. **Avoid hugging, kissing, or sharing food or drinks with people at increased risk for severe illness in your household**.

9. **Don't have visitors unless they need to be in your home (e.g., home health nurse).** If you do have visitors, before they enter your home, check yourself and others in your household for symptoms of COVID-19 and ask your visitors to do the same. Let your visitors know if you or anyone in your home has been exposed to COVID-19 or is sick with COVID-19. Do not allow any sick or exposed visitors to enter your home. Remember to stay at least 2 meters or 6 feet (about 2 arm lengths) apart, wear a mask, and ask visitors to wear a mask before entering your home. Learn more at http://bit.ly/covid19_visitors.

10. **Avoid having family members at increased risk care for others in their household**. If people at increased risk must be the caregiver, those who are being cared for should stay home as much as possible to protect their family members at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

You can find more information at http://bit.ly/covid19_highrisk.

How to keep children healthy

Children and other people can spread the virus even if they don't have symptoms. While most children do not appear to be at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19, some children have severe illness, especially infants and children with underlying medical conditions. **To help protect children and keep them healthy during the COVID-19 pandemic, follow these tips**:

11. **Teach children how to protect themselves and others.** Children and other people can spread the virus even if they don't show symptoms. Teach and reinforce everyday preventive actions to children, like covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue, throwing away used tissues in a lined trash can, and immediately cleaning hands afterwards.

12. **Children 2 years and older should cover their mouth and nose with a mask when around people who don't live in your household.**

13. **Teach children to wash their hands often and for at least 20 seconds each time.** Explain that hand washing can keep them healthy and stop the virus from spreading to others. Remind children to wash their hands after blowing their nose, coughing, or sneezing, after going to the bathroom, after being outside, and before and after eating food.

    » If soap and water are not readily available, use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol and rub hands together until dry. Young children should be supervised to ensure they are using sanitizer safely.

14. **Try not to let children play with kids from other households.** If children from different households do play together, encourage outdoor play and remind them to wear a mask and stay at least 2 meters or 6 feet (about 2 arm lengths) apart from each other. Children should avoid sharing toys.
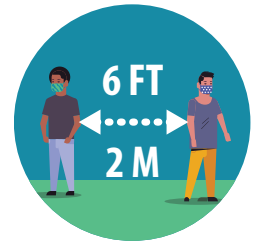
    » Remind children to wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds after playing with children from other households. If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

15. **Help children stay connected to their friends through video chats, phone calls, and written letters.**

16. **Help your child cope with stress.** Watch for signs of stress or behavior changes. Answer questions and share facts about COVID-19 in a way that your child can understand. Reassure your child that they are safe and let them know it is okay to feel upset. You can find more tips for talking to children about COVID-19 at http://bit.ly/covid19_talktochild.

You can find more information at http://bit.ly/covid19_children.

How to isolate a sick family member

If a family member is sick with COVID-19, it can be difficult to avoid close contact with that person when space is limited. **Isolation** is used to separate people who are sick with COVID-19 from people who are not infected. **When isolating a sick family member, follow these tips:**

1. **Keep as much space as possible—stay at least 2 meters or 6 feet (about 2 arm lengths) apart—between the person who is sick and others, including pets.** Separate people at increased risk of severe illness from anyone who is sick.

2. **Have the sick household member wear a mask when they are around the caregiver or others in the household.** Don't place a mask on children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or anyone who is not able to remove the covering without help. Learn more about masks at https://bit.ly/covid19_masks.

3. **Remind those who are sick to cover coughs and sneezes and avoid touching their eyes, nose, mouth, and mask.**

4. **All household members should wash hands often with soap and water** or use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol and avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth.

5. **Have only one person in the household take care of the sick person.** This caregiver should not be at increased risk for severe illness.

   » Minimize contact with other people in the household, especially those who are at increased risk for severe illness.
   » Have a caregiver for the person who is sick and a different caregiver for other members of the household who need help with cleaning, bathing, or other daily tasks.
   » The caregiver should wear a mask when caring for the sick person and if they must interact with or provide care to other members of the household with underlying conditions.

6. **Avoid sharing personal items like phones, dishes, cups, utensils, towels, bedding, or toys with the person who is sick.**

7. **Clean and disinfect anywhere in the house the sick person has been, as well as their bedding and clothing.** Learn more https://bit.ly/covid19_clean_disinfect.

8. **If you share a bedroom with someone who is sick:**
    » Make sure the room has good air flow. Open a window and turn on a fan to bring in and circulate fresh air if it is safe and practical to do so.
    » Place beds at least 2 meters or 6 feet (about 2 arm lengths) apart. If this isn't possible, sleep head to toe.
    » Put a physical divider around the sick person's bed. For example, you could use a shower curtain, room screen divider, large cardboard poster board, quilt, or large bedspread.
    » Wash and dry linens after someone who is sick uses them. Wear disposable gloves while handling dirty laundry.

9. **If you share a bathroom with someone who is sick**, have them clean and disinfect it after each use. If this is not possible, the caregiver should wear a mask and disposable gloves and wait as long as practical after the sick person has used the bathroom before going in to clean. The sick person should wear a mask when using the bathroom, if possible. Make sure the bathroom has good air flow. Open a window and turn on a fan to bring in and circulate fresh air if it is safe and practical to do so.

10. **Don't have visitors unless they need to be in your home (e.g., visit by a nurse).** Let visitors know that someone in your home is sick with COVID-19. If visitors must enter, they should wear a mask and stay as far away as possible from the sick person, at least 2 meters or 6 feet (about 2 arm lengths).

11. **The sick person should stay in isolation until they meet the criteria to end home isolation.**

Learn more at http://bit.ly/covid19_endisolation.

How to care for a sick family member

Most people who get sick with COVID-19 will have only mild illness and should stay at home to recover. **If you are caring for someone who is sick at home, follow these tips:**

1. **Make sure the person with COVID-19 does the following:**

   » Drinks enough fluids to stay hydrated.
   » Rests at home.
   » Uses over-the-counter medicines to help with symptoms (after talking to their doctor over the phone).
   » Washes their hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
   » For most people, symptoms last a few days and improve after a week.

2. **Limit your contact with the sick person as much as possible.** Ask the person who is sick to wear a mask, if possible, before you care for them. The caregiver should also wear a mask while providing care to the sick person, as this might provide some protection.

3. **Caregivers should quarantine.** Caregivers should quarantine after caring for someone who is sick. Learn when and how to quarantine at http://bit.ly/covid19_quarantine.

4. **Clean surfaces, doorknobs, and other commonly touched surfaces with soap and water. Then, use a household cleaner to disinfect (kill germs) these surfaces daily.** Find a list of household cleaners and disinfectants that are effective against the virus that causes COVID-19 here: http://bit.ly/covid19_disinfectants.

   » Open a window and turn on a fan while using cleaning products to bring in and circulate fresh air if it is safe and practical to do so.
   » If possible, dedicate a lined trash can for the person who is sick. Place used disposable gloves and other contaminated items in a lined trash can. Wash your hands after handling trash.
   » Wash and dry linens after someone who is sick uses them. Wear disposable gloves while handling dirty laundry.

More about cleaning and disinfecting can be found here: http://bit.ly/covid19_clean.
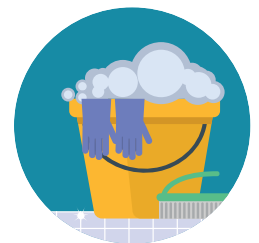
5. **Have their doctor's phone number on hand and call their doctor if the person with COVID-19 gets sicker or if you have questions or concerns about the person you are caring for.** If you are not fluent in English, ask for an interpreter or ask a family member to help. If the person with COVID-19 needs to visit the doctor, call before you go and have the person who is sick wear a mask.

6. **Look for emergency warning signs* for COVID-19. If someone is showing any of these signs, seek emergency medical care immediately:**
   » Trouble breathing
   » Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
   » New confusion
   » Inability to wake or stay awake
   » Bluish lips or face

   * This list does not include all possible symptoms. Please call their doctor to report any other symptoms that are severe or concerning to you.

7. **Call 911 for medical emergencies.** Tell the 911 operator that the person has, or you think they have, COVID-19. If you are not fluent in English, ask for an interpreter or ask a family member to help.

8. **Ask a friend or neighbor to help pick up your groceries and medicine, if possible.** Or check delivery options available in your area.

You can find more information about caring for someone who is sick at http://bit.ly/covid19_care4sick.

How to provide food when someone is sick

If possible, make a plate for the sick family member to eat in their separate area. If they cannot eat in their separate area, they should stay as far away as possible—at least 2 meters or 6 feet (about 2 arm lengths) apart from other family members—during meals or eat at a different time from the rest of the family. **Also, follow these tips:**

1. **Don't help prepare or serve food if you are sick.**

2. **Have everyone in the household wash their hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water before and after preparing food or eating.**

3. **Use clean utensils to serve food.** Have one person serve food to all family members or have each family member serve themselves using their own clean utensils to avoid handling the same utensils.

4. **Don't eat from the same dishes or use the same utensils as anyone else in the household.**

5. **Have the caregiver wear a mask to bring food to the sick person and clean up the sick person's dishes and utensils.** This should be someone who is not at increased risk for severe illness.

6. **Wear gloves to handle the sick person's used or dirty dishes, drinking glasses, and utensils, if possible.** Also, wash used items with hot, soapy water or in a dishwasher.

   » If the sick person has leftover food to keep for later, store their food in a separate container and label it for the sick person so others know not to eat it.

7. **Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water after handling used dishes and utensils and after removing gloves.**
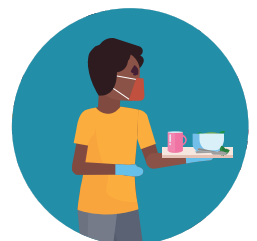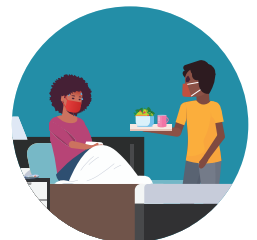
How to quarantine when exposed to someone who is sick

Quarantine is used to separate someone who might have been exposed to COVID-19 away from others to help prevent the spread of disease. **If you or someone in your household have had close contact with someone who has COVID-19, follow these tips:**

1. **Stay home and monitor your health.**
   - » Stay home and quarantine after your last contact with a person who has COVID-19.
   - » Watch for fever (100.4°F or higher), cough, shortness of breath, new loss of taste or smell, or other symptoms of COVID-19.
   - » If possible, stay away from others including pets, especially people who are at increased risk for getting very sick from COVID-19. While this can feel lonely, quarantining is necessary to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and protect yourself and your household. Contact your local health department or healthcare provider for alternative housing options if you feel you cannot safely quarantine in your home.

2. **Cover coughs and sneezes; wash hands often; and don't touch your eyes, nose, mouth or mask. Wash your hands after touching your eyes, nose, mouth or mask.**

3. **If someone in your household is sick with COVID-19 and can isolate by staying in a separate bedroom**, you and others in your household who were in close contact with that sick person should quarantine (separate yourselves away from the sick person) and stay home for a period of time after your household member with COVID-19 started isolating.

4. **Any time a new household member gets sick with COVID-19 and you had close contact, you will need to restart your quarantine.**

5. **If you are caring for a family member who is sick with COVID-19 or can't separate yourself from the person who is sick**, you should quarantine while caring for the person who has COVID-19 and for a period of time after your household member with COVID-19 can end isolation.

   Learn how to quarantine: http://bit.ly/covid19_quarantine. Check your local health department's website for information about options in your area to possibly shorten your quarantine period.

   More information on when a person with COVID-19 can end isolation and be around others can be found at http://bit.ly/covid19_endisolation.

6. **Limit visitors to only those who need to be in the home (e.g., home health nurse).** Let your visitors know that someone in your home is sick with COVID-19 and others are quarantining. If visitors must enter, they should wear a mask and stay as far apart as possible—**at least 2 meters or 6 feet (about 2 arm lengths) apart**— from the sick person and anyone who is quarantining.

7. **Ask a friend or neighbor to help pick up your groceries and medicine, if possible**. Check with your local grocery store to see if they deliver.

You can find more information about when and how to quarantine at http://bit.ly/covid19_quarantine.

cdc.gov/coronavirus