Guidance for Patients Discharged with Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19 Cases

Your healthcare provider has evaluated you and has determined that you can be cared for at home. After discharge, please follow these recommendations until your symptoms resolve or you are instructed otherwise by your healthcare provider.

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 stands for “coronavirus disease 2019.” This is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. Like the flu or common cold, COVID-19 is spread by droplets produced by infected persons when they sneeze or cough. The risk of infection is thought to be greatest when you are in prolonged close contact with an infected person (such as a family member). While it may also be possible to catch the virus by touching an infected surface and then touching your nose or mouth, this is probably not the primary way that the virus spreads. Because of this, practicing social distancing (such as avoiding travel, standing at least 6 feet away from other people, and avoiding shaking hands) is probably more effective than wearing a facemask, which will cause you to touch your face more often.

There is no specific antiviral treatment for COVID-19. Antibiotics do not treat COVID-19 since it is not caused by bacteria. There is currently no vaccine to protect against COVID-19.

For individuals with symptoms who are confirmed or suspected cases of COVID-19

If you have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or suspected to have COVID-19 because you have been exposed to someone with COVID-19, follow the steps below to help prevent the disease from spreading to people in your home and community.

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. Avoid using public transportation, ride-sharing, or taxis.

Separate yourself from other people and animals in your home

People: As much as possible, you should stay in a specific room and away from other people in your home. Also, you should use a separate bathroom, if available.

Animals: You should restrict contact with pets and other animals while sick. When possible, have another member of your household care for your animals while you are sick; if you must care for your pet, wash your hands before and after you interact with pets and wear a facemask.

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.

Wear a facemask

You should wear a facemask when you are around other people (e.g., sharing a room or vehicle) or pets and before you enter a healthcare provider’s office. If you are not able to wear a facemask (for example, because it causes trouble breathing), then people who live with you should not be in the same room with you, or they should wear a facemask if they enter your room.

Cover your coughs and sneezes

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw used tissues in a lined trash can; immediately clean your hands as described below.
Clean your hands often
Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry. Soap and water is preferred if hands are visibly dirty. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

Avoid sharing personal household items
You should not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, or bedding with other people or pets in your home. After using these items, they should be washed thoroughly with soap and water.

Clean all “high-touch” surfaces every day
High touch surfaces include 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. Use a household cleaning spray or wipe, according to the label instructions. 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 and making sure you have good ventilation during use of the product.

Monitor your symptoms
Seek prompt medical attention if your illness is worsening (e.g., difficulty breathing). Before seeking care, call your healthcare provider and tell them that you have, or are being evaluated for, COVID-19. Put on a facemask before you enter the facility. These steps will help the healthcare provider’s office to keep other people in the office or waiting room from getting infected or exposed.

Discontinuing home isolation
You can discontinue these steps once 7 days have passed since the onset of your symptoms and the following conditions are met:

1. If you HAD a fever and are now fever free without the use of fever reducing medications AND the symptoms you had are improving (cough, shortness of breath) you can discontinue the home isolation 3 days LATER:
2. If you DID NOT have a fever AND you see an improvement in your symptoms (cough, shortness of breath) you can discontinue home isolation 3 days after
3. If you have fever with cough or shortness of breath but have not been exposed to someone with COVID-19 and HAVE NOT tested positive for COVID-19, you should stay home away from others 3 days after the fever is gone and symptoms get better.

If your doctor’s instructions for isolation go beyond the number of days above, please follow your doctor’s isolation recommendation

Call if you have questions or concerns.
- If you have a medical emergency and need to call 911, notify the dispatch personnel that you have, or may have COVID-19. If possible, put on a facemask before emergency medical services arrive.
- Contact your primary care provider to evaluate your progress and recovery if instructed to do so.
- Yale New Haven Health’s COVID-19 call center is available at 1 833-ASK-YNHH (833-275-9644) for your questions each day between 7 am and 7 pm.
- If you do not have a primary care doctor, you can call 855-NEMG-MDS for a Northeast Medical Group physician, or call 1-888-461-0106 for more information or assistance in selecting a doctor.
- Yale Health members should call the Yale Health COVID-19 hotline at 203-432-6604.
- You may also consult the Center for Disease Control and Prevention’s website (CDC.gov) for additional information.
- If you have a medical emergency and need to call 911, notify the dispatch personnel that you have, or may have COVID-19. If possible, put on a facemask before emergency medical services arrive.
- Additional information for your household members, intimate partners, and caregivers is available at: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-prevent-spread.html