

Keeping Your Family Safe from COVID-19: Hospital Workers' Guide

At Work:

- **SOCIAL DISTANCING:** No team rounding or in-person meetings, limit patient exams to 1 person from the care team when possible, limit work-room occupancy, and maintain 6 feet between individuals **AT ALL TIMES**.
- **HAND HYGIENE:** Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap/hot water or use hand sanitizer.
- **UNIVERSAL MASKING:** Put your cloth mask on as soon as you enter campus and leave it on except if you need to transition to other forms of PPE that are relevant to your patient care activities.
- **LIMIT PERSONAL ITEMS:** Keep non-essential personal items at home. If you need to have things with you during your shift, try to keep them clean. For example: Keep your cellphone in a Ziplock bag. Don't share personal items with coworkers.
- **FOOD PLANNING:** Bring food with you or order ahead when picking up food from hospital restaurants.
- **CLEAN WORKSTATIONS:** At a workstation, make sure to wipe down the phone, computer keyboard, and mouse — as well as the surrounding area — before you use it.

At Home:

- **HEALTH CHECKS:** Take your temperature twice a day. If you don't have a thermometer, self-monitor to see if you are feeling feverish. Stay home if you're sick or feel like you are getting sick. Cover coughs and sneezes. Teach children at home to use tissues and cough into their elbows instead of their hands (aka the "vampire cough").
- **ISOLATE SICK INDIVIDUALS:** If someone in your house is sick, have them self-isolate as much as possible. Limit their activity to a single room and bathroom. Make sure they cover coughs and sneezes. Don't share personal items with them if they are ill. [CDC guidance for this can be found here.](#)
- **HAND HYGIENE:** Make everyone wash their hands with soap and hot water for 20 seconds as soon as they enter your home. Every time. No exceptions. Engage children by having them be "hygiene monitors" who sing "Happy Birthday" twice to keep handwashing going for the appropriate amount of time.
- **COATS AND SHOES:** When you arrive home from the hospital, leave your coat away from items that belong to you or to your family members. Leave shoes outside, in a garage, or by the door. If you can, keep your outerwear separate from the rest of your family's belongings.
- **CHANGE YOUR CLOTHES:** If you aren't able to change at the hospital, as an extra precaution you should take off your work clothes when get home and take a hot shower. Place your dirty work clothing in a dedicated bag or hamper so you can easily put them into the wash without having to touch soiled items. If your work items cannot be washed regularly, separate them and limit other individuals' access. (This may mean keeping things in your car, garage, or a designated area of your home.) Help children by creating a game to delay hugs and kisses until after you've had a chance to change and clean up (e.g. "Mommy is invisible until she's changed and showered").
- **WASH YOUR FACEMASK:** Clean your cloth facemask after every shift. Put it in the laundry or hand wash with soap and **hot** water. Wring it out or roll it tightly in a towel before air-drying if you don't have a dryer. Heat helps kill coronaviruses, so make sure the water is hot.
- **DISINFECT HIGH-TOUCH AREAS:** Make sure to regularly clean high-touch areas in your home. This includes: cellphones, computers, remotes, door knobs (especially the one you use to come in from outside), light switches, faucets, tables, counters, and handles for cabinets/drawers,

refrigerators, dishwashers, washers/dryers, etc). Use a disinfecting wipe, soap and water, or a sanitizing spray. Beware of “organic” and “natural” products. They may not be able to kill viruses as well.

- **LAUNDRY AND DISHES:** Use hot water and detergent/soap to wash clothes and dishes. Wash your hands immediately after loading the dishwasher or washing machine. Wash your hands again before unloading clean items and putting them away.
- **BE CAREFUL WITH SUPPLEMENTS AND MEDICATIONS:** Lots of websites tell people to take certain supplements or medications to boost their immunity or kill coronaviruses. Some of these are fine, while others can be dangerous. Check with your doctor before you start any medication or supplement.
- **MASK APPROPRIATELY:** Follow the [latest CDC guidance on when to wear facemasks](#). Make sure you save medical-grade masks for healthcare settings.
- **OPEN THE WINDOWS:** High airflow can disperse respiratory infections. If possible, open windows and doors periodically to get fresh air moving throughout your home. (Be careful not to have too much airflow from a sick person’s room directly into the rest of the house.) As the

weather improves, you can use fans, windows, doors, and existing HVAC systems to change the airflow so virus particles and respiratory droplets flow from healthy/safe areas of your home into the areas where sick people may be isolating. This also helps them get much needed fresh air and keeps their germs from spreading.

- **LOWER THE RISK FOR HIGH-RISK INDIVIDUALS:** If you live with people who are immunocompromised, older, or those with other medical problems, talk to their doctor about how to lower their risk. In certain cases, it may be wise to limit their contact with you (or others in your house who work in essential services). This so-called “reverse isolation” often involves giving them a “safe” part of the house as their own and using masks, social distancing, and following all the other information in this guide to help prevent them from getting sick when they’re out of their designated “safe space.”
- **MAKE A PLAN:** Develop a plan for how to manage if you or someone in your home is exposed to COVID-19 or becomes sick. Be prepared to stay in place and limit your travel except to get [medical care](#).

In Between:

- **PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION:** Avoid using public transportation if you can. If you have to take the train or bus, maintain at least 6 feet of distance from other people and don’t touch your face. Keep your hands in your pockets or cross your arms. This helps avoid accidentally touching contaminated surfaces. Use hand sanitizer frequently or wash your hands as soon as you are able. The medical center has changed its parking policies so you can more easily park your vehicle on campus to avoid having to use public transportation.
- **MOBILE ORDERING:** Avoid crowded stores and long lines by using mobile ordering for groceries or using takeout. If possible, choose your stores wisely. Some businesses are doing a great job of enforcing social distancing policies in their stores; others aren’t.