Precautions for Viral Illness or COVID-19

At Home Instructions for
Household Members, Intimate Partners and Caregivers

These precautions are for **anyone who may have close contact in a non-healthcare setting with a patient who has lab confirmed symptoms of COVID-19** or a person being checked for COVID-19 or with another viral illness such as the flu

For more information go to: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/risk-assessment.html

Close Contacts Must Follow These Recommendations

To care for and support the patient with COVID-19 symptoms or other respiratory viral illnesses, you must:

- Understand and help them follow their doctor's instructions for medications and care.

- Help the patient with basic household needs and provide support for getting groceries, prescriptions, and other personal needs.

- **Keep watch of the patient's symptoms. Get help if the patient is getting sicker.**

    - If your loved one has been confirmed to have COVID-19, call their doctor and tell them that the patient has lab confirmed COVID-19. This will help the doctor's office take steps to keep other people in the office or waiting room from getting infected. Ask the doctor to call the local or state health department for more guidance.

    - If the patient has a medical emergency and you need to call 911, tell the person on the phone that the patient has, or is being checked for COVID-19.

- Be sure shared spaces in the home have good air flow, such as by an air conditioner or an opened window when there is good weather.

- Do not have visitors who do not have to be in the home.

- Care for any pets in the home. Anyone who is sick must not handle pets or other animals. This is to prevent the spread of infection.

Keep Watch of Your Own Health

- Call your doctor right away if you develop symptoms of COVID-19 such as a fever, cough or shortness of breath.

- **Wash your hands often** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that has 60 to 95 percent alcohol.

    - Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.

    - Soap and water must be used if you see dirt on the hands.

- **Do not touch your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.**

- Stay in another room and **be separated from the patient as much as possible**.

- Use a separate bedroom and bathroom.

AT THE FOREFRONT
UChicagoMedicine

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To Protect Yourself and Others

- **Do not share household items with the patient**. Do not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, bedding, or other items. After the patient uses these items, wash them very well (see below "Washing Laundry").

- **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, stool, or body fluids on them.

- Use a household cleaning spray or wipe, according to the label instructions. Labels have instructions for safe and the best use of the cleaning product. This includes precautions you must take when putting on the product, such as wearing gloves and making sure you have good air ventilation when using the product.

Masks and Personal Protective Equipment

- **If you have masks available, the patient is the one that needs to wear the facemask when around other people**. If the patient is not able to wear a facemask (for example, because it causes trouble breathing), the caregiver must wear a mask when in the same room as the patient. If you do not have masks, try to maintain a distance of 6 feet as much as possible.

- Wear a disposable facemask and gloves when you touch or have contact with a patient's blood, stool, or body fluids, such as saliva, sputum, nose mucus, throw-up or urine.

- Throw out disposable facemasks and gloves after using them. Do not reuse.

- **When removing personal protective equipment:** First remove and dispose of gloves. Then clean your hands right away with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Next, remove and dispose of facemask, and clean your hands right away again with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

- Place all used disposable gloves, facemasks, and other contaminated items in a lined container before throwing them out with other household waste. Clean your hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer right away after handling these items. Soap and water must be used if see dirt on hands.

Washing Laundry

- Remove and wash clothes or bedding right away that has blood, stool, or body fluids on it.

- Wear disposable gloves when touching soiled items and keep soiled items away from your body. Clean your hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer right away after removing your gloves.

- Read and follow directions on labels of laundry or clothing items and detergent. You can use normal laundry detergent according washing machine instructions and dry very well using the warmest temperatures recommended on the clothing label.

For more questions: Talk with your state or local health department or your doctor.
You can also contact UChicago Medicine COVID-19 Hotline at (773) 702-2800.