USAID MTaPS PROGRAM: COVID-19 TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Recommended precautions for household members, intimate partners, and caregivers in a nonhealthcare setting of a patient with confirmed or suspected COVID-19[1]

Household members, intimate partners, and caregivers in a nonhealthcare setting may have close contact with a person with symptomatic, laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 or a person under investigation. Close contacts should monitor their health; they should call their healthcare provider right away if they develop symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 (e.g., fever, cough, shortness of breath).

Close contacts should also follow these recommendations:

- Make sure that you understand and can help the patient follow their healthcare provider's instructions for medication(s) and care. 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 the patient is getting sicker, call his or her healthcare provider and tell them that the patient has laboratory-confirmed COVID-19. This will help the healthcare provider's office take steps to keep other people in the office or waiting room from getting infected.

- Household members should stay in another room or be separated from the patient as much as possible. Household members should use a separate bedroom and bathroom, if available.

- Prohibit visitors who do not have an essential need to be in the home.

- Household members should care for any pets in the home. The patient should not handle pets or other animals while sick.

- Make sure that shared spaces in the home have good air flow provided by an air conditioner or an opened window, weather permitting.

- Perform hand hygiene frequently. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 70% alcohol, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry. Soap and water should be used if hands are visibly dirty.

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

- The patient should wear a facemask when the patient is around other people. If the patient is not able to wear a facemask (for example, because it causes trouble breathing), you, as the caregiver, should wear a mask when you are in the same room as the patient.

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

  - Throw out disposable facemasks and gloves after using them. Do not reuse (see below for disposal).

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

- Avoid sharing household items with the patient. You should not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, bedding, or other items. After the patient uses these items, you should wash them thoroughly (see "Wash laundry thoroughly" below).

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[1] CDC. Coronavirus 2019. Preventing the Spread of Coronavirus Disease 2019 in Homes and Residential Communities. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-prevent-spread.html

- Clean all "high-touch" surfaces, such as counters, table tops, door knobs, 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 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.

- Wash laundry thoroughly.

  - Immediately remove and wash clothes or bedding that have blood, stool, or body fluids on them.

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

  - Read and follow directions on labels of laundry or clothing items and detergent. In general, using a normal laundry detergent according to washing machine instructions and dry thoroughly using the warmest temperatures recommended on the clothing label.

- Place all used disposable gloves, facemasks, and other contaminated items in a lined container and tie bag before disposing of them with other household wastes. Clean your hands (with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer) immediately after handling these items. Soap and water should be used if hands are visibly dirty.

- Discuss any additional questions with your local health department or healthcare provider.

FOOTNOTES

Close contact is defined as—

a) Being within approximately 6 feet (2 meters) of a COVID-19 case for a prolonged period of time; close contact can occur while caring for, living with, visiting, or sharing a health care waiting area or room with a COVID-19 case

– *or* –

b) Having direct contact with infectious secretions of a COVID-19 case (e.g., being coughed on)

REFERENCES

CDC. Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Patients with Suspected or Confirmed Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Healthcare Settings. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/infection-control/control-recommendations.html#adhere

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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