

# Preventing COVID-19 Spread in Households

## Confirmed COVID-19 Infection

Household members, intimate partners, and caregivers in a nonhealthcare setting may have close contact with someone is symptomatic and has been laboratory-confirmed with a COVID-19 infection. Close contacts should monitor their own health and should call their healthcare provider right away if they develop symptoms similar to COVID-19 (e.g., fever, cough, shortness of breath). See [Interim Guidance](#) from the CDC.

## Patient Care

Make sure you understand and can help the patient follow their healthcare provider's instructions for medication(s) and care. 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 getting sicker, call the healthcare provider and tell them that the patient has laboratory-confirmed COVID-19. This will help the provider's office take steps to keep other people in the office or waiting room from getting infected. Ask the healthcare provider to call the local or state health department for additional guidance. If it is a medical emergency and you need to call 911, notify the dispatch the patient has, or is being evaluated for COVID-19.

## Physical Separation

Household members should be separated from the patient as much as possible, using a separate bedroom and bathroom, if available. Prohibit non-essential visitors. Ensure shared spaces in the home have good air flow, such as by an air conditioner or an opened

window, weather permitting. Avoid sharing household items with the patient. Do not share dishes, cups, eating utensils, towels, bedding, or other items. Consider having a separate setting of dishes and separate set of towels for each household member. After the patient uses these items, wash them thoroughly.

Household members should care for any pets in the home. Do not handle pets or other animals while sick. For more information, see [COVID-19 and Animals](#).

## Individual Protection

Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol, cover all surfaces of your hands and rub together until they feel dry. Use soap and water if hands are visibly dirty. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.

The patient should wear a facemask when around others. If the patient is not able to wear a facemask (because it causes trouble breathing), you, as the caregiver, should wear a mask when 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. To remove personal protective equipment, first dispose of gloves. Immediately clean hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Next, dispose of facemask, and immediately clean hands again with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

## Cleaning Surfaces

Clean frequently touched surfaces every day, like counters, tabletops, doorknobs, light fixtures, high back chairs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, sinks, phones, keyboards, tablets, and remote controls. Clean any surfaces that may have blood, stool, or body fluids on them. Use a household cleaning spray with a disposable paper towel or wipe, according to the label instructions.

Labels contain instructions for safe and effective use of cleaning products including precautions you should take when applying it, such as wearing gloves and making sure you have good ventilation during use. Gloves should be discarded after each cleaning. If reusable gloves are used, those gloves should be dedicated for cleaning and disinfection of surfaces for COVID-19 and should not be used for other purposes. Cleaning products may not be suitable for use on food preparation surfaces. Ensure the product is [effective on the COVID-19 virus](#).

Clean dirty surfaces with hot soapy water before disinfecting. For disinfection, diluted household bleach solutions, alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol, and most common EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective. Diluted household bleach can be used if appropriate for the surface. Follow manufacturer's instructions for safe procedures. Check to ensure the product is not past its expiration date. Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser. Unexpired household bleach will be effective against coronaviruses when properly diluted. Prepare a bleach solution by mixing: 5 tablespoons (1/3<sup>rd</sup> cup) bleach per gallon of water or 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water. A new batch of disinfecting solution should be prepared daily. (CDC, [Clean and Disinfect](#)).

Products made for use on surfaces are not safe for use on hands or skin. Wash all kitchenware with hot soapy water and rinse well. Allow to air dry if possible. Change kitchen towels and dishcloths frequently.

## Washing Laundry

Wearing disposable gloves, immediately remove and wash clothes or bedding that have blood, stool, or body fluids on them. Keep soiled laundry away from your body. Wash your hands immediately after removing your gloves with soap and water or use a 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer according to manufacturer's directions.

Read and follow directions on labels of laundry or clothing items and detergent. Use a normal laundry detergent according to washing machine instructions and dry thoroughly using the warmest temperatures recommended on the clothing label. Launder kitchen towels, bath towels and dishcloths frequently using hot water cycle and a hot dryer setting if possible.

## Disposing of Trash

Throw out disposable facemasks and gloves after using them. Do not reuse. Place all contaminated items in a lined container before disposing of them with other household waste. Waste receptacles should have a snug fitting lid to prevent contaminated items from accidentally spilling. Clean your hands (with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, see above) immediately after handling these items. Soap and water is best when hands are visibly dirty.

## Following Up with Professionals

Contact and discuss any additional questions or concerns with your state or local health department or healthcare provider.

Learn more about COVID-19 and ways to protect yourself, loved ones, and your community: Visit [California Department of Public Health COVID-19](#)