

March 19, 2020

**Guidelines for Household Members, Intimate Partners, and Caregivers (in a Nonhealthcare Setting) of a Person Confirmed to have COVID-19**

This guidance is for household members, intimate partners, and caregivers in a nonhealthcare<sup>1</sup> setting that may have had close contact<sup>2</sup> with a person who has tested positive for COVID-19. If you are a household member, intimate partner, or caregiver (nonhealthcare setting) of a person with COVID-19, DC Health recommends that you follow the steps below to help prevent the spread of the virus in the home and community.

**Actions you should take:**

- **Separate yourself from other people (self-quarantine) as much as possible at your home.**
  - Stay in another room or be separated from the person who tested positive as much as possible.
  - Use a separate bedroom and bathroom, if available.
- **Avoid leaving the house:**
  - Avoid public activities and gatherings (e.g. church, parties, etc.)
  - Do not leave home to go to work or school
  - Work at home (telework) or use sick leave
  - If you are a student, make alternative arrangements to obtain class materials
  - Do not take public transportation (e.g. Metro buses or trains) and do not use taxis or rideshare services (e.g. Uber, Lyft)
  - Do not travel (airline, cruise ship etc.)
  - Prohibit visitors who do not have an essential need to be in the home
- **Avoid sharing household items.** You should not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, bedding, or other items. After you use these items, you should wash them thoroughly.
- **Ensure you and other household members care for any pets in the home.** If you get sick, then stop handling pets and other animals.

**Monitor yourself closely for symptoms of COVID-19:**

- Check for fever by taking your temperature twice a day and remain alert for cough or difficulty breathing.
- **If you develop symptoms:**
  - Most people have mild symptoms and can stay at home until they are feeling better.
  - Consult with your healthcare provider if you are greater than 60, or have chronic healthcare conditions (heart disease, diabetes, lung disease, immunocompromised, etc), or if you think you may be at higher risk of serious illness from COVID-19.
  - **If you have a medical emergency**, please call 911. Be sure to let them know about your exposure to a confirmed COVID-19 case. If you develop a fever, cough, or difficulty breathing, please contact your healthcare provider and let them know about your exposure to a confirmed COVID-19 case.

---

<sup>1</sup> Define non-household caregiver

<sup>2</sup> Close contact is defined as (1) being within approximately 6 feet (2 meters) of a COVID-19 case for a prolonged period of time or (2) having direct contact with infectious secretions of a COVID-19 case (e.g., being coughed on).

- **Visits to a healthcare facility for any reason must be via medical transport (e.g. ambulance) or private vehicle.** Be sure to call ahead and wear a face mask if available.

**If you are taking care of your sick household member:**

- The person positive for COVID-19 should wear a facemask when they are 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.
- Place all used disposable gloves, facemasks (if available) and other contaminated items in a lined container before disposing of them with other household waste if available.
- **Clean your hands often.** Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use a store-bought alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains 60 to 95% alcohol, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry. Do not make your own hand sanitizer. Soap and water should be used if hands are visibly dirty.
- If they are getting sicker, call their healthcare provider. **If they have a medical emergency and you need to call 911**, notify the dispatch personnel that the patient has COVID-19.

**Stay Informed**

- Visit <https://coronavirus.dc.gov/> to get the most up-to-date information.
- Sign up for AlertDC: <https://hsema.dc.gov/>