



## COVID-19 Household Recommendations

As a household member, you will have close contact with a person with symptoms of COVID-19 or who has tested positive for COVID-19. If at all possible, if you need to provide care, you should not be someone who is at high risk for severe illness from COVID-19. Monitor your own health for cough, shortness of breath/difficulty breathing fever, chills, repeated shaking with chills, congestion, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell. If you have these symptoms, call a doctor or the Nurse Triage Line at 320-373-1026 right away.

There are other viral illnesses that have similar signs and symptoms consistent with COVID-19. If a member of the household, who is ill, receives a negative COVID test, they and other contacts may resume their normal day to day activities. The individual who receives a negative COVID-19 test must be fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications AND have improvement of symptoms in order to return to normal activities. If the ill individuals symptoms persist and do not improve, it is recommend to contact the Nurse Triage Line 320-373-1026 to review symptoms and determine if they need to be retested for COVID-19.

Household contact results in higher likelihood of transmission and time of last exposure may be difficult to determine with certainty, particularly if there are multiple exposed or infected persons in the household. You, as well as other household members and immediate contacts will need to quarantine for 14 days after your last known contact with the positive individual. If you are able to avoid further close contact with the positive individual, your quarantine begins on the last day of known exposure. It is important to monitor for any new symptoms daily during your quarantine period.

There will be times where separation from the COVID Positive individual is not feasible. As the caregiver, your quarantine period does not begin until the positive individual's isolation period ends. It is important to adhere to the guidelines to prevent spread of disease that can occur before a person knows they are sick or if they are infected with the virus without feeling symptoms.

### **Monitoring symptoms:**

- Follow the doctor's instructions.
- If symptoms get worse, call the doctor, emergency department or Nurse Triage Line:  
Meeker Memorial Clinic Dassel phone: 320-275-4330  
Meeker Memorial Clinics East/West phone: 320-693-3233  
Meeker Memorial Hospital phone: 320-693-4500  
Meeker Memorial Hospital Nurse Triage Line: 320-373-1026  
Let them know you are caring for someone who has or may have COVID-19, along with their symptoms. By doing this, you will help the doctor's office take steps to keep other people in the office or waiting room from getting sick. Both you and the sick person should wear facemasks.
- Call 911 for a medical emergency (trouble breathing, persistent pain in chest, new confusion, unable to awaken, bluish lips or face). Tell the 911 operator about COVID-19.

Put a facemask on the sick person and on any household members before emergency medical services arrive, if possible.

### **Caring for a person who is sick:**

- Assist with basic needs in the home and help get groceries, prescriptions and other personal necessities. Consider ordering online and having items delivered. If you need to leave the home, wear a facemask and avoid public transportation. Keep at least 6 feet away from other people. Public Health Services may be able to assist with essential needs. Call 320-693-5370, M-F, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- Make sure the person who is sick drinks lots of fluids and gets rest.
- Wear gloves when you touch or have contact with blood, stool or body fluids, such as saliva, sputum, nose mucus, vomit and urine. Remove and throw away gloves after use. Then, clean your hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer right away. Do not reuse gloves.
- Avoid sharing household items. You should not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, bedding, electronics or other items. Wash items fully after use.
- Take care of yourself. Get rest and stay hydrated. Wash your hands often.

### **Wearing a facemask:**

Facemasks should fit snugly but not restrict breathing. They should cover the nose and mouth. If using a cloth facemask, machine wash it routinely. Wash your hands right after touching the facemask for any reason.

- Person who is sick:
  - Wear a facemask when around other people at home. The facemask helps others in the house avoid getting sick.
  - Do not put facemasks on children under 2 years old.
- Caregiver: Wear a facemask when caring for the sick person.

### **Separating the person who is sick:**

- Household members should stay in another room or be separated from the sick person as much as possible. Use a separate bedroom and bathroom. If not possible, household members should wait as long as possible before going in the bathroom and clean it before use. If sharing a bedroom, keep beds at least 6 feet apart and place a divider (curtain, blanket, poster board) between beds.
- Visitors who do not need to be in the home should not come over.
- Household members should care for pets in the home. Do not handle pets or other animals if sick.
- Make sure shared rooms in the home have good air flow, such as by an air conditioner or an open window with fan, weather permitting.
- The sick person and anyone else in the same room should wear a facemask. Keep at least 6 feet apart.
- Home isolation for the sick person may end when the doctor and Minnesota Department of Health allow. Factors for ending isolation include:
  - No fever for at least 24 hours without use of fever-reducing medicine **AND**
  - Other symptoms have improved **AND**
  - At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

### **Cleaning your hands:**

- 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 60 to 95% alcohol. Be

sure to cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry. Use soap and water if you see dirt.

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

### **Cleaning your home:**

- 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.
  - o Use a household cleaning spray or wipe following the label instructions. Labels contain instructions for safe and effective use of the cleaning product to kill germs. Many cleaning products recommend wearing gloves and having good air ventilation when using them.
  - o To clean electronics, follow product label instructions. You may use alcohol-based wipes or disinfectant spray that contains at least 70% alcohol.
- Handle any dishes, cups/glasses or silverware used by the sick person with gloves. Wash items with soap and hot water or in a dishwasher. Throw away gloves and wash your hands right away.
- Wash laundry thoroughly.
  - o Do not shake dirty laundry.
  - o Dirty laundry from the sick person can be washed with other people’s laundry.
  - o Remove and wash clothes or bedding that have blood, stool or body fluids on them.
  - o Wear disposable gloves while touching dirty items, and keep dirty items away from your body. Clean your hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer right after taking off your gloves.
  - o Read and follow directions on laundry soap and clothing labels. Washing with a washing machine on the warmest setting and drying on the warmest setting are best to kill germs.
  - o Clean clothes hamper after laundry and wash hands right away.
- Trash:
  - o Place all used disposable gloves, facemasks and other dirty items in a lined trash can before throwing them away with other household waste.
  - o Use gloves when handling and removing trash. Remove gloves and clean your hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer right away. Use soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.
  - o If possible, have a separate, lined trash can for the sick person.

If you have other questions, talk to your doctor or local or state health department (Minnesota Department of Health: 651-201-3920 or 800-657-3903).

## References:

CDC (2020). Caring for Someone Sick at Home or Other Non-healthcare Setting. Retrieved on July 23, 2020 from: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/care-for-someone.html>.

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