



Interim Congregate Living Settings Guidance for Patients with Suspected or Confirmed Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

March 26, 2020 (replaces version dated February 7, 2020)

Patients confirmed to have, or being evaluated for, COVID-19 infection may be cared for outside of a medical facility and in a congregate living setting based on public health and medical evaluation. Prior to a healthcare facility, healthcare provider, or public health professional approving care outside a medical facility, the following steps should be taken.

If an individual residing in a congregate living facility, such as a group home, dorm or barracks, has mild symptoms and is able and willing to go to their permanent residence without significant travel, this is recommended. Travel to a permanent home setting should be within driving distance via personal transportation. No public transportation should be taken including rideshare, buses, planes, or trains. For further guidance, please refer to [CDC's home care guidance](#).

If transportation to a permanent residence is not possible, isolation can be provided by the university or other overseeing agency following the below recommendations.

Early reports suggest person-to-person transmission most commonly happens during close exposure to a person infected with COVID-19, primarily via respiratory droplets produced when the infected person coughs or sneezes. Droplets can land in the mouths, noses, or eyes of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs of those within close proximity. The contribution of small respirable particles, sometimes called aerosols or droplet nuclei, to close proximity transmission is currently uncertain. However, airborne transmission from person-to-person over long distances or through ventilation systems is unlikely.

Pre-requisites for isolation in a congregate living setting (e.g., group home, dorm, barracks):

1. **Healthcare provider or local health department conduct remote telephone assessment to assure congregate living setting is appropriate for patient to self-isolate:**
 - A. Establish suitability of congregate living setting for home care self-isolation:
 - Separate room/living space** (away from others in the facility) with access to bathroom and kitchen facilities
 - Patient is able to **adhere to recommended precautions** (see included recommendations)
 - If patient is unable to perform self-care, but another **identified caregiver** is available
 - Caregiver should be capable of performing all tasks listed in caregiver guidance, provided on pages 6-7.
 - Caregivers and household members are considered to be close contacts and asked to limit movement outside of the home to the extent possible. In this case there should be assistance available to provide resources that will be needed from outside the home such as food and other necessities. The local health department may be a resource to assist with this if necessary.
 - Caregivers should not themselves have a high risk for complications if they were to get sick (e.g., age ≥ 65 ; compromised immune systems; chronic health conditions such as chronic heart, lung, or kidney conditions, diabetes, or cancer)

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2. **Develop communication plan with healthcare provider and the local health department**
 - A. Establish method of communication with healthcare provider and local health department until the patient fully recovers or has negative COVID-19 testing
 - B. **Notify healthcare provider and local health department** immediately of any change in the patient's clinical status
3. **Educate patients and caregivers on the recommendations for home care infection prevention for COVID-19**
 - A. See included documents for infection prevention recommendations for facilities (page 3-4), COVID-19 patients (page 5), and caregivers (pages 6-7).
 - B. View the [CDC's home care recommendations](#)
4. **Confirm that residential facility can fulfill the recommendations below.**

Recommendations for Facility Administration Regarding Care for Individuals Confirmed to have, or Being Evaluated for, COVID-19 Who Reside in or Receive Care in a Congregate Living Setting

Identify a suitable room for patient

- Is **well ventilated**.
- Has an attached **private bathroom**, if possible. If this is not possible, identify another close-by bathroom that may be restricted to use by the patient only.
- Ideally **located away from others**.

Identify one or more caregivers who can provide for patient

- Assure caregiver(s) can provide support for the patient's basic needs such as: getting meals, groceries, toiletries, prescriptions, and other personal needs.
- Assure caregiver(s) can monitor the patient's symptoms.
- Ensure communication between caregiver(s), patient, and healthcare provider/local health department.
- Ensure caregiver(s) availability for duration of patient's potential isolation.

Limit the number of people who have contact with the patient

- Only people essential for providing care should enter patient room.
- Other residents should stay away from patient.
- Other residents should use a separate bathroom.
- Restrict visitors** who do not have an essential need to be in the residence.
- Keep older adults, very young children, and those who have compromised immune systems or chronic health conditions away from the patient. This includes people with chronic heart, lung or kidney conditions, diabetes, and cancer.
- Maintain log** of caregivers and visitors who enter patient's room.

Ensure sufficient supplies

- Ensure patient has dishes, utensils, and glassware or sufficient disposable products that are **not shared with others**.
- Ensure supply of **gloves and facemasks** covering mouth and nose that can be used by all persons who enter the patient room.
- Ensure the availability of **lined waste receptacles** in the patient's room and bathroom.

Define a laundering procedure

- Launder linens (e.g. clothing, bedding) contaminated with blood, body fluids and/or secretions or excretions at the warmest temperatures recommended on the item's label.
- Wear gloves** (and gown if potential for contamination of clothing exists) when handling soiled linens.
- Place soiled linens in lined container for transport.

Define a cleaning procedure

- Clean all touchable surfaces**, such as counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables daily, and as needed. Also, clean any surfaces that may have blood, body fluids, and/or secretions or excretions on them.
- Wear gloves** when cleaning surfaces.
- Use a **diluted bleach solution** (e.g., dilute bleach with 1 part bleach and 50 parts water) or a household disinfectant with a label that says [EPA-registered for coronaviruses](#). To make a bleach solution at home, add 4 teaspoons of bleach to 1 quart (4 cups) of water, or 5 tablespoons (1/3 cup) of bleach to 1 gallon of water.

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- Read labels of cleaning products and follow recommendations provided on product labels. 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 or eye protection and making sure you have good ventilation during use of the product.
- Place all contaminated waste in a lined container before disposing of them with other routine waste.
- Wash hands immediately** after handling waste.

Infection Prevention Recommendations for Individuals Confirmed to have, or Being Evaluated for, COVID-19 Who Receive Care in a Congregate Living Setting

Individuals who are confirmed to have or are under evaluation for COVID-19 should follow the prevention steps below until the local or state health department says they can return to normal activities.

Stay in your room except to get medical care

You should restrict activities inside and outside the building, except for getting medical care. Do not go into common areas, to work, classes, or other public settings, and do not use public transportation or taxis.

Call ahead before visiting your doctor

Before your medical appointments, call the healthcare provider and tell them that you have, or are being evaluated for, COVID-19 infection. This will help the healthcare provider's office take steps to keep other people from getting infected. Ask your healthcare provider to call the local or state health department.

Monitor your symptoms

Seek prompt medical attention if your illness is worsening (e.g., difficulty breathing). **Before** going to your medical appointment, call the healthcare provider and tell them that you have, or are being evaluated for, COVID-19 infection. Ask your healthcare provider to call the local or state health department.

Wear a facemask

You should wear a facemask that covers your mouth and nose any time you leave your room, and anytime others are in your room with you. People who visit you should also wear a facemask while they are in the same room with you.

Separate yourself from other people in the building

As much as possible, you should stay in your room and away from other people in the building. Use a separate entrance, and avoid elevators, if possible. Also, you should use a separate bathroom from others, if available.

Avoid sharing household items

You should not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, bedding, or other items with other people. After using these items, you should wash them thoroughly with soap and water.

Cover your coughs and sneezes

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, or you can cough or sneeze into your sleeve. Throw used tissues in a lined trash can, and immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand rub.

Wash your hands often

Wash your hands often and thoroughly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. You can use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available and if your hands are not visibly dirty. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

Discontinuing home isolation

See [NC Guidance for discontinuation of home isolation](#) for further information.

Prevention Steps for Caregivers and Household Members of Individuals Confirmed to have, or Being Evaluated for, COVID-19 Being Cared for in a Congregate Living Setting

If you are providing care for or housing a person confirmed to have, or being evaluated for, COVID-19, please follow these guidelines to prevent infection.

Follow healthcare provider's instructions

Make sure that you understand and can help the patient follow the healthcare provider's instructions for all care.

Provide for the patient's basic needs

You should help the patient with basic needs in the residence and provide support for getting meals, groceries, toiletries, prescriptions, and other personal needs.

Monitor the patient's symptoms.

If they are getting sicker, call his or her medical provider and tell them that the patient has, or is being evaluated for, COVID-19. This will help the healthcare provider's office take steps to keep other people from getting infected. Ask the healthcare provider to call the local or state health department.

Keep older adults, very young children, and other sick people away from the patient

Keep older adults, very young children, and those who have compromised immune systems or chronic health conditions away from the patient. This includes people with chronic heart, lung or kidney conditions, diabetes and cancer.

Limit the number of people who have contact with the patient

- If possible, have **only one caregiver** for the patient.
- Restrict visitors** who do not have an essential need to see the patient.

Wash your hands often

- Wash your hands often and thoroughly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.** You can use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available and if your hands are not visibly dirty.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Use disposable paper towels** to dry your hands. If not available, use dedicated cloth towels and replace them when they become wet.

Wear a facemask and gloves

- Wear a disposable facemask** at all times when in the room **and gloves** when you touch or have contact with the person's blood, body fluids, and/or secretions or excretions, such as sweat, saliva, sputum, nasal mucus, vomit, urine, or diarrhea. Ensure the mask fits over your nose and mouth tightly, and do not touch it during use.
- Throw out disposable facemasks and gloves after using them. **Do not reuse.**
- Wash your hands immediately** after removing your facemask and gloves.
- If your personal clothing becomes contaminated, carefully remove clothing and launder. **Wash your hands** after handling contaminated clothing.
- Place all used facemasks, gloves and other waste in a lined container before disposing them with other routine waste
- Remove gloves and wash your hands** immediately after handling these items.

Do not share dishes, glasses or other items with the patient

- Avoid sharing items. You should not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, bedding, or other items with a person who is confirmed to have, or being evaluated for, COVID-19.
- After the person uses these items, wash items thoroughly with soap and water.

Wash laundry thoroughly

- Launder linens (e.g., clothing, bedding) contaminated with blood, body fluids, and/or secretions or excretions immediately
- Wear gloves** (and gown if potential for contamination of clothing exists) when handling soiled linens
- Place soiled linen in lined container for transport
- Read and follow directions on labels of laundry or clothing items and detergent. In general, wash and dry with the warmest temperatures recommended on the label.

Clean all areas the individual has used often

- Clean all touchable surfaces**, such as counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables daily, and as needed. Also, clean any surfaces that may have blood, body fluids, and/or secretions or excretions on them.
- Wear gloves** when cleaning surfaces the patient has come in contact with.
- Read labels of cleaning products and follow recommendations provided on product labels. 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 or eye protection and making sure you have good ventilation during use of the product.
- Use a **diluted bleach solution** or a household disinfectant with a label that says [EPA-registered effective against coronaviruses](#). To make a diluted bleach solution, 4 teaspoons of bleach to 1 quart (4 cups) of water, or 5 tablespoons (1/3 cup) of bleach to 1 gallon of water.
- Remove gloves and wash hands** immediately after cleaning.

Monitor yourself for signs and symptoms of illness

Caregivers and household members are considered close contacts, should monitor their health, and will be asked to limit movement outside of the home to the extent possible. Follow the monitoring steps for close contacts listed on the [symptom monitoring form](#).

- Discuss any additional questions with your local health department.
- This guidance is subject to change. For the most up-to-date guidance from CDC, please refer to their [website](#).