

LEAVING COVID-19 AT WORK

Recommendations for keeping household members safe

Many healthcare providers (HCPs) worry about bringing the coronavirus home and potentially infecting roommates, family members, and loved ones. These are practical suggestions for minimizing the risk of infection for HCP's household members.

MINIMIZE YOUR EXPOSURE TO THE VIRUS AT WORK

1. Follow your institution's and/or the CDC's guidance on [screening and isolating patients](#).¹
2. Practice good **hand hygiene**:
 - a. Wash your hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol for at least 20 seconds.² This should be done before and after donning and doffing gloves, before and after touching a patient, etc.
 - b. Do not touch your face or phone while wearing gloves.
3. Wear the [appropriate PPE](#) as outlined by your institution or the CDC.^{3,4} If you are unsure of how to use a piece of equipment or what size you should wear, ask!
4. Make sure you know how to [correctly don and doff](#) your equipment to **avoid self-contamination**.^{4,5}

WHEN IT IS TIME TO GO HOME

1. **Wash your hands** with soap and water or hand sanitizer **before leaving work** and as soon as **you arrive home**.⁶
2. **Disinfect your phone** and any other items you may have handled at work. Consider leaving shoes and other items that cannot be washed outside of the home.
 - a. *Follow manufacturer guidelines on cleaning your devices. Consider using alcohol-based products, such as **wipes or sprays**, containing at least **70% alcohol** if no guidelines are provided.*²
 - b. *If using disinfecting wipes, read the directions to determine how long a surface must remain **visibly wet** in order to disinfect the surface.*
3. **Change your clothes and shower** when you arrive home.⁶ It is safe to wash your clothes with other family members' laundry, just make sure you use warm or hot water. Consider using gloves when handling dirty laundry and wash your hands when you're done, even if gloves were used.^{2,6}

*Remember that the chances of contaminating your clothes and phone are relatively low when wearing the appropriate PPE and practicing good hand hygiene, but mistakes happen.*⁶

DO I NEED TO MOVE OUT?

The experts say no, but there are no official guidelines at this point.⁶ Use your best judgment based on your level of risk. Consider following quarantine guidelines (sleeping in a separate bedroom, using a designated bathroom, and avoiding food preparation) if one of your household members is considered high risk.⁷ Otherwise, ensure that you are cleaning high-touch surfaces on a daily basis and avoid sharing utensils, water glasses, or personal items like chapstick with family members.²

WHAT IF I DEVELOP SYMPTOMS?

If you develop a fever or other symptoms of COVID-19 you will need to isolate yourself from other household members by staying in a separate room and using a separate bathroom. Follow the CDC's recommendations on [return-to-work criteria](#).⁸ Your household members will also need to start a 14-day quarantine and monitor themselves for symptoms. You can find more information about Isolation and Quarantine at ncahec.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Isolation-and-Quarantine-Guidelines-for-Patients-2020-06-19.v5.pdf.

ANYTHING ELSE?

These are difficult times and it is important to care for yourself in addition to taking care of everyone else. We hope you will find the time to exercise, relax, spend time with your family, and connect virtually with friends and colleagues. The NC Medical Society maintains a list of [Emotional Support Services](#) available to HCPs while dealing with COVID-19.

WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE?

1. "Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Patients with Suspected or Confirmed Coronavirus Disease 2019." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 13 Apr. 2020, [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-recommendations.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-recommendations.html)
2. "Cleaning And Disinfecting Your Home: Everyday Steps and Extra Steps When Someone Is Sick." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2 Apr. 2020, [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/disinfecting-your-home.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/disinfecting-your-home.pdf)
3. "COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for Healthcare Personnel." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 23 Mar. 2020, [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/COVID-19_PPE_illustrations-p.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/COVID-19_PPE_illustrations-p.pdf)
4. "Using Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 3 Apr. 2020, [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/using-ppe.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/using-ppe.html)
5. "Sequence for Putting on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [cdc.gov/hai/pdfs/ppe/PPE-Sequence.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/hai/pdfs/ppe/PPE-Sequence.pdf)
6. Berg, Sara. "How Doctors Can Keep Their Families Safe after Providing COVID-19 Care." AMA, American Medical Association, 8 Apr. 2020, [ama-assn.org/practice-management/physician-health/how-doctors-can-keep-their-families-safe-after-providing-covid](https://www.ama-assn.org/practice-management/physician-health/how-doctors-can-keep-their-families-safe-after-providing-covid)
7. "Prevent the Spread of COVID-19 if You Are Sick." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 3 May 2020, [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/sick-with-2019-ncov-fact-sheet.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/sick-with-2019-ncov-fact-sheet.pdf)
8. "Criteria for Return to Work for Healthcare Personnel with Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19 (Interim Guidance)." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 30 April 2020, [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/sick-with-2019-ncov-fact-sheet.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/sick-with-2019-ncov-fact-sheet.pdf)



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