



PRIVATE HEALTH

CIRCLE OF SAFETY

HOW TO REDUCE COVID-19 INFECTION RISK AT HOME

March 27, 2020

Although a global pandemic of COVID-19 is beyond any one person's control, we all have an opportunity and an obligation to adapt our behavior to mitigate the spread of this contagion for the safety of our communities, our healthcare workers and ourselves.

In order to insure to the maximum extent possible that you are not exposed to the virus, you can create a **CIRCLE OF SAFETY** around your home. The core principal is physical distance— but not social distance-- from people who might be infected and from surfaces that might contain virus particles for many hours or days. Although some of these steps may feel awkward and cumbersome, they must be implemented now to reduce the spread of this highly contagious disease and help ensure your safety and the safety of your loved ones. If you live with others, everyone in your home should follow these guidelines. This is especially important for the most vulnerable populations described below.

These guidelines draw upon the scientific literature, practices used by clinicians in other viral outbreaks and the experiences of our infectious disease physicians and former military advisors. All have been adapted for home and individual use.

HOUSEHOLD

- Those who live in your house form your CIRCLE OF SAFETY
- Do not let anyone into your home who does not have an essential reason to be there
- If someone needs to enter your home:
 - Do not permit them to enter if they have any symptoms or have reason to believe they have been infected
 - Have them leave their shoes and outer garment outside, sanitize their hands, and if available, put on gloves and a mask (which they should take with them).
 - After they leave, sanitize any surfaces they have touched and wash your hands

At Home

- Before entering your home, take your shoes off and leave them outside or spray them with a disinfectant. If possible, take your clothes off, especially the outer layer, if you have been to a highly trafficked area like the supermarket or pharmacy or come into close proximity to anyone outside your CIRCLE OF SAFETY. Remove your gloves and use disinfectant wipes on your cell phone, keys, credit cards, wallet, etc. that you used during your trip.
- Immediately upon entry, wash hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds, and do so regularly and before preparing and eating meals
- Wash clothes frequently and bedding and towels at least once a week

Provisioning

- Make a list of products you use regularly, including any prescription medications, and order a two-month supply now for home delivery if possible

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- Procure supplies that would be helpful if you become sick, such as fever reducers, cold medications, electrolyte replacements, etc.
- Anticipate shortages and delays both in stores and via e-commerce

Accepting Deliveries

- Prevent the introduction of virus into your home as follows:
 - Have all deliveries of food, drugs, supplies, etc. dropped off outside your door, without any contact with the delivery person. Postmates and other services now offer this option.
 - Do not bring any exterior packaging into your home
 - Before you begin to open the exterior package outside your home, put on gloves and disinfect the package
 - If the contents of the package are likely to have been touched by others, use disinfectant spray or wipes to disinfect the contents
 - For fresh fruit and vegetables, wash them immediately in hot soapy water. For prepared hot foods that are ready to be eaten, put them in a microwave or oven to increase the heat.
 - After processing your delivery, remove your gloves and wash hands thoroughly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
 - Use disinfectant spray or wipes on doorknob, doorbell, etc., after delivery
 - Cancel dry cleaning as there is a risk of contamination

Cleaning

- Clean and disinfect your home regularly, especially shared hand-touch surfaces such as doorknobs, light switches, countertops, faucets, etc.
- A recent [study](#) published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* found that the virus is detectable for up to 3 hours in droplets in the air, up to 4 hours on copper, and up to 2-3 days on plastic and stainless steel. Recent data suggest that the virus may remain infectious even longer, so these precautions are even more important.
- You can easily make an effective disinfectant by mixing household liquid bleach and water at a ratio of 1 part bleach to 10 parts water. Put it in a dedicated spray bottle, MARK IT CAREFULLY and KEEP IT AWAY FROM CHILDREN. Do not use the bottle for anything else. The mixture can be used for up to 24 hours. Spray on shoes, outer packages, hand touch surfaces, etc.
- [Here](#) is a list of EPA-approved products for use against emerging viral pathogens

Make a Plan in Case Someone Gets Sick

- Most people infected with COVID-19 will experience mild symptoms similar to a common cold that do not require care from a physician
- If someone were to become sick, determine where they can self-isolate within your home to minimize risk of infection for others
- Determine who will care for the sick person and consult the CDC [guidelines](#) for caring for a loved one with suspected COVID-19

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- Contact the sick person's healthcare provider by calling before they get care and avoid public transportation if visiting the provider
- If the sick person has trouble breathing, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, becomes confused, is not arousable or has bluish lips or face, seek medical attention immediately

Keep in Touch with Friends and Family

- Physical distancing does NOT require social distancing
- By connecting with each other, we can support everyone's mental and physical health
- We strongly encourage staying in close touch with your loved ones, friends and colleagues via technology-- call, text, email, FaceTime, Zoom, etc.
- Write a letter – yes, it's been a long time since we regularly did this; why not bring it back?

LEAVING HOME

- Only leave your home for essential needs (work, necessary doctor appointments obtaining food and prescription drugs and supplies) and exercise (running, biking, hiking in a remote area)
- Avoid public transportation, if possible
- When you need to go outside, wear disposable gloves, a face mask, hat, long sleeves and pants
- Maintain distance from others in public areas (at least six feet)
- Keep antiviral hand sanitizer with you and use it often
- Do not touch shared hand-touch surfaces
- If you must go to the supermarket, pharmacy, or other retail establishment, wear gloves and a mask. Bring antiviral hand sanitizer and wipes with you. Wipe down the cart and wear gloves. Do not touch items at the store besides those you purchase. Ask the sales clerk to sanitizer their hands before double-bagging your items and exchanging payment. Avoid cash transactions if possible.
- Use credit cards/Apple Pay instead of cash whenever possible

MOST VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

People who are more likely to become seriously ill if infected should take all possible precautions.

There is evidence to show that the following factors increase the risk of a more serious presentation if infected:

- Increased Age / Male
- COPD/Smoking
- Cardiovascular disease
- Diabetes
- Hypertension

The following factors likely increase the risk:

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- Autoimmune conditions, particularly those on biological treatments, including:
 - Rheumatoid arthritis
 - Inflammatory Bowel Disease (Ulcerative Colitis and Crohn's disease)
 - Lupus and scleroderma
- On immune-suppressive medication routines most frequently related to:
 - Organ transplantation
 - Cancer
- Diabetes
- Chronic kidney disease

COVID-19 Disclaimer

Private Health Management is providing this COVID-19 report based on the information available and the judgment of experts as of the date of the report. Knowledge about this unprecedented outbreak is evolving rapidly and chaotically and many things once believed to be true have been shown by subsequent developments to be erroneous. While the content herein is based on our current understanding and the current guidance of experts, Private Health expects that there will be rapid, unpredictable and ongoing changes in the course of this epidemic and the measures that are being used or advocated to address it. Accordingly, we encourage everyone to (i) consult many other sources of information (ii) make decisions based on all of the information they can obtain and (iii) be prepared to make rapid changes in their plans. Private Health Management does not accept any liability or responsibility whatsoever for any decisions or actions based in part or whole on this or other information or guidance we provide.

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