

## Guidance to Prevent Close Contact when a Household Member is Sick with COVID-19

### PURPOSE:

*If you are a close contact of a member of your household, the following guidance will assist you to stay safe.*

### DEFINITIONS:

**Close Contact** = Someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period starting from 2 days before they have symptoms (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to test specimen collection date) until they meet the criteria to end isolation.

**Quarantine** keeps someone who might have been exposed to the virus away from others.

**Isolation** keeps someone who is infected with the virus away from others, even in their home. *Isolation period = 5 days pending status of fever and symptoms.*

### SITUATION:

An employee that is a **close contact** of a household member that tested positive for COVID-19 does not need to quarantine and may continue to report to work unless they develop symptoms or test positive for COVID-19 in which case they must isolate. However, they must wear a mask for a full 10 days after the last date of contact with the infected person and they are advised to get tested after at least 5 full days since last instance of close contact with the infected person. If the employee that had close contact with an infected person has had COVID-19 within the previous 3 months, has recovered, and remains without COVID-19 symptoms then the employee also does not need to quarantine.

### WHAT YOU CAN DO:

*To **isolate** the sick person, which will help prevent further instances of close contact, practice the following preventative measures:*

- ✓ **Maintain your distance** - Stay at least 6 feet apart from the sick person
- ✓ **Wear masks** when around each other in same room or area
  - The mask helps prevent a person who is sick from spreading the virus to others. It keeps respiratory droplets contained and from reaching other people.
- ✓ **Wash hands** often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Everyone in the household should wash or sanitize hands often. Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- ✓ **Avoid sharing personal items**
  - Do not share dishes, cups/glasses, silverware, towels, bedding, or electronics (like a cell phone) with the person who is sick
- ✓ **Isolate the sick person to a portion of the home** where possible
  - If possible, have the person who is sick use a separate bedroom and bathroom. If possible, have the person who is sick stay in their own “sick room” or area and away from others. Try to stay at least 6 feet away from the sick person.
  - *Shared spaces:*
    - Do not use shared spaces (kitchen, etc.) at the same time as the sick person, if possible.
    - If you must share space, limit the amount of time you are in that space with the sick person as much as possible, wear masks, and maintain 6 feet of distance from the sick person. Make sure the shared space has good air flow; improving ventilation helps remove respiratory droplets from the air. Be sure to disinfect surfaces and touch points before and after use.
  - Avoid having visitors. Avoid having any unnecessary visitors, especially visits by people who are at higher risk for severe illness.

- Eat in separate rooms or areas. The person who is sick should eat (or be fed) in their room, if possible.
- Wash and dry laundry
  - Do not shake dirty laundry.
  - Wear disposable gloves while handling dirty laundry.
  - Dirty laundry from a person who is sick can be washed with other people's items.
  - Wash items according to the label instructions. Use the warmest water setting you can.
  - Remove gloves, and wash hands right away.
  - Dry laundry, on hot if possible, completely.
  - Wash hands after putting clothes in the dryer.
  - Clean and disinfect clothes hampers. Wash hands afterwards.
- Use lined trash can
  - Place used disposable gloves and other contaminated items in a lined trash can.
  - Use gloves when removing garbage bags, and handling and disposing of trash. Wash hands afterwards.
  - Place all used disposable gloves, masks, and other contaminated items in a lined trash can.
  - If possible, dedicate a lined trash can for the person who is sick.

✓ **Clean and then disinfect:**

- Disinfect "high touch" surfaces before and after use such as tables, doorknobs, light switches, handles, desks, toilets, faucets, sinks, microwave and stove buttons/knobs, and electronics (disinfect every day).
- Clean the area or item with soap and water if it is dirty. Then, use a household disinfectant.
  - Be sure to follow the instructions on the label to ensure safe and effective use of the product. Many products recommend keeping the surface wet for several minutes to kill germs. Many also recommend wearing gloves, making sure you have good air flow, and wiping or rinsing off the product after use.
  - Most household disinfectants should be effective. See a list of EPA-registered disinfectants.
  - To clean electronics, follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products. If those directions are not available, use alcohol-based wipes or spray containing at least 70% alcohol.
  - Bedroom and bathroom-
    - If you are using a separate bedroom and bathroom, only clean the area around the person who is sick when needed, such as when the area is soiled. This will help limit your contact with the sick person.
    - If they feel up to it, the person who is sick can clean their own space. Give the person who is sick personal cleaning supplies such as tissues, paper towels, cleaners, and EPA-registered disinfectants.
    - The person who is sick should clean and then disinfect after each use. If this is not possible, wear a mask and wait as long as possible after the sick person has used the bathroom before coming in to clean and use the bathroom.

If you have any questions, please contact University Safety & Assurances by emailing [COVID19-safety@uwm.edu](mailto:COVID19-safety@uwm.edu).

Reference: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/care-for-someone.html>

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