

March 2020

Updated 3/6/2020: Home Isolation Guidance for Families and Individuals Living in Permanent Supportive Housing (Stand-Alone Units)

What to do if you have confirmed novel coronavirus (COVID-19) infection, or are being evaluated for COVID-19 infection, and are being cared for at home.

If you are under evaluation or care for a novel coronavirus infection, your doctors, along with local Public Health staff, will evaluate whether you can be cared for at home. Public Health staff will check in with you to make sure you are receiving the care you need and to monitor your symptoms.

Please follow the steps below until Public Health staff say you can return to your normal activities:

- **Stay home.** You should limit all activities outside your apartment unit, except to get medical care. If you need medical care, please call your health care provider and they will give you instructions. Do not go to work, school, or public areas. Avoid using public transportation, ride-shares, or taxis.
- **Monitor your symptoms.** Seek prompt medical attention if your illness is worsening (e.g., difficulty breathing). Before seeking care, call your healthcare provider and tell them that you have, or are being evaluated for, COVID-19. Put on a facemask before you enter the medical facility. These steps will help the healthcare provider's office to keep other people in the office or waiting room from getting infected or exposed.
- **If you have a medical emergency:** call 911, notify the dispatch personnel that you have, or are being evaluated for COVID-19. If possible, put on a facemask before emergency medical services arrive.
- **Call your doctor's office before you go in for your appointment.** Tell them that you have, or are being evaluated for, novel coronavirus infection. This will help the medical provider take steps to keep others from getting infected. Wear a face mask when you visit a medical provider.

If you share your apartment unit with other people:

- **Separate yourself from other people in your home.** You should stay in a different room from other people in your home, as much as possible. Use a separate bathroom, if available. Avoid common areas.
- **Wear a facemask.** You should wear a facemask when you are around other people (e.g., sharing a room or vehicle) or pets and before you enter a healthcare provider's office. If you are not able to wear a facemask (for example, because it causes trouble breathing), then people who

live with you should not stay in the same room with you, or they should wear a facemask if they enter your room.

- **Wash your hands.** Wash your hands often and thoroughly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. 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.
- **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.
- **Avoid sharing household items.** Do not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, bedding, or other items with other people in your home. After using these items, you should wash them thoroughly with soap and water.
- **Clean all “high-touch” surfaces every day.** High touch surfaces include counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables. Also, clean any surfaces that may have blood, stool, or body fluids on them. Use a household cleaning spray or wipe, according to the label instructions. 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 and making sure you have good ventilation during use of the product.

Discontinuing home isolation Patients with confirmed COVID-19 should continue to follow home isolation precautions until you have been advised that you can stop following those recommendations. The decision to stop home isolation precautions should be made on a case-by-case basis, in consultation with healthcare providers and state and local health departments.

Updated 3/6/2020: Prevention Steps for Caregivers and Household Members

If you live with or care for a person who has confirmed COVID-19 infection, or is being evaluated for COVID-19 infection, you should:

- **Limit visitors.** Restrict visitors who do not need to be in the home. Other household members should stay in another home or place of residence. If this is not possible, other household members should stay in another room, or be separated from the ill person as much as possible. The ill person should use a separate bathroom, if available.
- **Keep elderly people and those who have compromised immune systems or chronic health conditions away from the sick person.** This includes people with chronic heart, lung or kidney conditions, and diabetes.
- **Make sure that shared spaces in the home have good air flow, such as by an air conditioner or an opened window.**
- **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.
 - Staff and caregivers should wear a disposable face mask, gloves and protective gown when they touch or have contact with the person's blood, body fluids and secretions such as sweat, saliva, sputum, nasal mucus, vomit, urine or diarrhea. Staff should contact public health if they do not have this kind of protective equipment.
 - Throw away facemasks, protective gowns and gloves in a lined trash can after using them. Do not reuse these items.
 - Wash hands immediately with soap and water after removing mask, gloves and gown.
- **Avoid sharing household items.** Do not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, bedding, or other items. Wash these items after the person uses them.
- **Clean surfaces** such as counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables at least once a day. Immediately clean any surfaces that have blood or other body fluids on them.
 - Use a diluted bleach solution or a household disinfectant with a label that says "EPA-approved."
 - To make a bleach solution at home, add 1 tablespoon of bleach to 4 cups of water. For a larger supply, add ¼ cup of bleach to 1 gallon (16 cups) of water. Use a freshly made bleach solution each day.
 - Read cleaning product labels and follow their recommendations.

• **Wash laundry and bedding:**

- Wear disposable gloves while handling soiled items. Wash clothes and bedding that have body fluids on them, such as saliva or mucus. Wash your hands with soap and water immediately after removing your gloves.
- Wash and dry clothing and bedding with the warmest temperature recommended on the item's label.

• **Monitor the person's symptoms.** If they are getting sicker, call a medical provider and tell them that the person has, or is being evaluated for, 2019-nCoV infection. This will help the medical provider take steps to keep other people from getting infected. Ask the medical provider to call the local or state health department.

• **Caregivers and household members who do not follow precautions** when in close contact with a person who is confirmed to have, or is being evaluated for, 2019-nCoV infection, are considered “close contacts” and should monitor their health. Follow the prevention steps for close contacts: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/mers/hcp/home-care-patient.html#contacts>

If you have questions, please contact King County novel coronavirus call center: 206-477-3977. The call center will be open 7 days per week from 8am-7pm.

This document was adapted from the Washington State Department of Health document titled “What to do if you have confirmed 2019-nCoV infection, or are being evaluated for 2019-nCoV infection, and are being cared for at home”.