

PATIENT EDUCATION HANDOUT

COVID-19: Protecting Yourself and Others

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COVID-19 is the name for the respiratory disease caused by the new coronavirus. The virus can travel six feet or more in the droplets of an infected person's sneeze or cough and this allows it to spread between people. The virus can also temporarily live on surfaces such as door handles, cellphones, and countertops. Touching a contaminated surface and then touching your eyes, nose or mouth can result in infection with the COVID-19. If infected with the virus, you may have mild symptoms or none at all. Even without symptoms, you are still considered contagious and can spread the virus to others. Common COVID-19 symptoms are trouble breathing, a fever, being tired, headache, loss of taste, loss of smell and a cough. This list does not include all possible symptoms. For a full list of symptoms, visit www.cdc.gov. While we learn more about COVID-19, the best way to avoid the disease is to do things to prevent catching it.

HAND HYGIENE

- We touch a lot of surfaces in a day, allowing for germs to build up on our hands. Washing your hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds will decrease the transmission of viruses and other germs.
- Cover your entire hand while washing, including both sides of your hands, wrists, between fingers and underneath your fingernails.
- Wash your hands after coughing, sneezing, blowing your nose, using the restroom or touching an animal.
- Wash your hands before preparing food, eating or caring for someone else.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- If soap is not available, you can use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol and rub your hands together in the same manner until they are dry.

MASKS

- Wear a cloth face cover or mask whenever you go out in public, even if you do not feel sick.
- The goal of the mask is to protect other people from your droplets and stop the spread of the virus. A mask can be made from any breathable material such as a heavy cotton t-shirt, pillowcase or flannel pajamas. A material with a higher thread count creates a tighter filter and smaller openings the virus must travel through.
- Perform a light test to see if the fabric will make a good mask. Hold up a bright light to different fabrics and pick the one that does not allow much light to pass through.
- The mask must be worn correctly to work. Put the mask over the bridge of your nose and below your chin, ensuring there are no openings.
- Do not take off the mask when out in public.
- When taking off the mask, use the loops to pull the mask off rather than touching the front of the mask. Wash your hands after removing the mask.
- Wash and dry your cloth mask daily and store in a clean space.

To scan this code with your phone, open the camera app & focus the camera over the QR code. Click on the link that pops up to watch each video.

Hand Washing Video



Wearing a Mask Video



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SOURCE(S): U.S. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, Up-to-Date, Mayo Clinic

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