

# COVID-19 Safety Tips for Healthcare Workers

According to the [Centers for Disease Control](#), the best way to prevent illness as a result of COVID-19 is to avoid exposure to the virus, which is thought to spread mainly from person to person, between people who are in close contact (within about six feet). The virus is transmitted through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or speaks, which can land in the mouths or noses or possibly get inhaled into the lungs of people nearby. To minimize the potential spread of COVID-19 in the workplace, rely on information provided by credible sources, such as the [CDC](#) and [OSHA](#) websites.

**Symptoms may appear 2 to 14 days after exposure and can include:**




FEVER



COUGH



SHORTNESS OF BREATH

 You can use the CDC's [self-check](#) to help you determine if you need medical care.

## OTHER RESOURCES:

[OSHA COVID-19 Control and Prevention for Healthcare Workers and Employers](#)

[CDC Information for Healthcare Professionals about Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

[CDC Infection Control Guidance for Healthcare Professionals about Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

[COVID-19 Training for Healthcare Professionals](#)

[EPA list of chemicals to use against COVID-19](#)

[COVID-19 video by Vox](#)

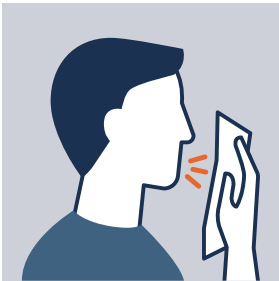
Sources: Centers for Disease Control, OSHA, and EPA

# How to Protect Yourself and Others



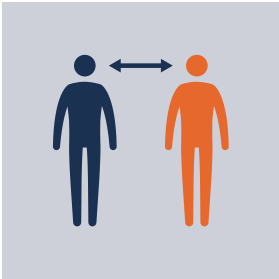
## Wash your hands often

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.



## Cover coughs and sneezes

- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash, or cough/sneeze into your elbow.
- Immediately wash your hands with soap and water for a least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.



## Social/physical distancing

- Stay a least six feet away from other people.
- Do not gather in groups.
- Stay out of crowded places and avoid mass gatherings.



## Personal protective equipment (PPE)

PPE must be worn by all healthcare personnel (HCP) to protect themselves, patients, and others when providing care. Required PPE types include:

- Eye protection
- Isolation gowns
- Gloves
- Face masks
- N95 respirators

## Disinfecting your facility

Routinely clean frequently touched surfaces (doorknobs, light switches, counters, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, sinks, etc.). For clothing, towels, linens, and other fabrics:

- Use the warmest appropriate water setting and dry items completely.
- A sick person's dirty laundry can be washed with other items. Do not shake dirty laundry.
- Clean and disinfect clothes hampers according to the guidance above.
- Remove gloves and wash hands right away.



# Infection Prevention and Control when Working with Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19 Patients in a Healthcare Setting

## Reduce facility risk

- Ensure facility infection control policies and practices are in place to minimize exposures.
- Cancel elective procedures and group activities, and use telemedicine when possible.
- Encourage using alternative mechanisms for patient/visitor interactions, such as video call applications on cellphones or tablets.
- Patients and visitors should put on a face covering/mask before entering the building.
- Limit visitors to only those essential for the patient's physical/emotional wellbeing and care.
- Limit points of entry and visitation hours to allow screening of all potential visitors. If fever or COVID-19 symptoms are present, the visitor should not be allowed to enter.
- Communicate information about patients with known or suspected COVID-19 to appropriate personnel before transferring them to other departments in the facility or other healthcare facilities.
- Routinely clean and disinfect shared equipment, frequently touched surfaces in resident rooms and common areas. Refer to [List N on the EPA website](#) for EPA-registered disinfectants that qualify under EPA's emerging viral pathogens program for use against SARS-CoV-2.

## Isolate symptomatic patients as soon as possible

- Set up separated, well ventilated triage areas for patients with suspected or confirmed COVID-19. Reserve airborne infection isolation rooms (AIIRs) for patients with COVID-19 undergoing aerosol generating procedures.
- Limit staff exposure and conserve PPE by designating entire facility units with dedicated HCP to care for patients with COVID-19.
- Prioritize testing of potential COVID-19 patients who require a hospital or congregate care setting (nursing home, care center) admission.
- Limit out-of-room patient movement and transportation to medically necessary purposes. Consider using portable equipment and performing procedures in patient rooms to minimize transportation.
- If COVID-19 is identified in the facility, restrict all residents to their rooms.
- For patients with COVID-19 or other respiratory infections, evaluate need for hospitalization. If hospitalization is not medically necessary, HCP should assess whether the residential setting is appropriate for [home care](#).

## Protect HCP

- Design and install engineering controls (physical barriers, curtains, air handling systems) to reduce/eliminate exposures by shielding HCP from infected individuals.
- HCP should monitor themselves regularly for COVID-19 symptoms and stay home when they are ill.
- Provide HCP with job- or task-specific education/training on preventing transmission agents and appropriate PPE use prior to caring for patients.

- HCP should adhere to standard infection prevention and control measures, including hand hygiene and selection and PPE use. Healthcare facilities should ensure that hand hygiene and PPE supplies are readily available to all personnel in every care location.
  - HCP should wash hands before and after contact with patients, potentially infectious materials, and before putting on/after removing PPE. [PPE](#) must be put on and removed to reduce exposure to COVID-19.
  - Due to the higher risk of unrecognized infection among residents, universal use of [all recommended PPE](#) (isolation gown, face mask, goggles, and gloves) for the care of all residents on the affected unit (or facility-wide, depending on the situation) is recommended when even a single case among residents or HCP is identified in the facility.
  - Any reusable PPE must be properly cleaned, decontaminated, and maintained after and between uses.
- Employers of healthcare workers are responsible for following applicable OSHA requirements, including OSHA's bloodborne pathogens ([29 CFR 1910.1030](#)), PPE ([29 CFR 1910.132](#)), and respiratory protection ([29 CFR 1910.134](#)) standards.

## COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment for Healthcare Personnel

