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## **In-home supports infection control guidance concerning COVID-19**

### **What is COVID-19?**

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. Patients with COVID-19 have experienced mild to severe respiratory illness, including fever, cough and shortness of breath. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel (new) coronavirus. It is not the same as other types of coronaviruses that commonly circulate among people and cause mild illness, like the common cold.

### **How does COVID-19 spread?**

The virus that causes COVID-19 is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person, between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet) through respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

### **Protect individuals supported and direct care staff from exposures and transmission**

Agency personnel *who provide HCBS waiver services to an individual in their family's home* can take a few simple steps to help protect both the individual supported and direct care staff:

1. When providing services in an individual's family home, identify individuals at risk for having COVID-19 before or immediately upon arrival to the home. The individual and any other person who will be in the home during the appointment (e.g., visitor, family member) should be carefully screened for the following:
  - a. Fever or respiratory symptoms (cough, shortness of breath or sore throat)
  - b. Close contact with a suspected or confirmed person with COVID-19
  - c. Travel from a COVID-19 affected community or geographic area within 14 days
  - d. Residing in a community where community-based spread of COVID-19 is occurring



If any one of these criteria is present, services in an individual's family home should only be conducted by essential personnel and assistance should be provided to the individual in notifying their health care provider as needed. The following are suggestions for determining essential personnel:

- Direct care staff that provide services in which the interruption would endanger the individual's life, health or personal safety.
  - Minimize the number of personnel in contact with the individual to reduce potential transmission.
  - Provide services via telemedicine, if appropriate, for the individual and with consent from the individual, to the greatest extent possible.
2. Maintain at least a 6-foot distance from the individual and other individuals in the home whenever possible.
  3. Wear a disposable facemask and gloves when providing direct care, including touching or having contact with stool or body fluids.
    - a. Masks should be conserved to the greatest extent possible.
    - b. Throw these away after use and do not reuse.
    - c. When removing, first remove and dispose of gloves, then immediately clean your hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
    - d. Next, remove and dispose of the facemask and immediately clean your hands again with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
    - e. Should you encounter a mask shortage, store your mask in a zip-top bag and do not touch the front of the mask, only the strings or ear loops. Clean your hands after securing the zip-top bag.
  4. Wash your hands often and thoroughly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains 60% to 95% alcohol, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry. You should use soap and water if your hands are visibly dirty.
  5. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
  6. Cover your coughs and sneezes. Use respiratory cough etiquette using your sleeve or tissue to cough. If a tissue is used, dispose of the tissue right away and perform hand hygiene immediately.
  7. Clean frequently touched surfaces and objects often using household disinfectants that contain bleach products or alcohol greater than 70%.
  8. Monitor symptoms of individuals supported.
    - a. If the individual has flu-like symptoms such as fever, cough or shortness of breath, both the individual (if they can tolerate a face mask) and the caregiver should wear face masks.

## Home care infection control guidance concerning COVID-19

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- b. If you suspect a possible COVID-19 case, assist the individual in contacting their health care provider, and if unavailable, call the ISDH Epidemiology Resource Center at 877-826-0011 (available 24/7).
9. For home care instructions for individuals who have or are being evaluated for COVID-19, visit: [www.in.gov/coronavirus/files/IN\\_COVID-19\\_Home\\_Care\\_3.18.20.pdf](http://www.in.gov/coronavirus/files/IN_COVID-19_Home_Care_3.18.20.pdf) .
10. Identify and train back-up caregivers, including informal and family caregivers and additional direct care staff. Work with the Individualized Support Team to develop a back-up plan, especially for those individuals without available informal or family support.
11. Get plenty of rest, drink fluids, eat healthy foods and manage your stress.
12. Stay home when you're sick. Follow your organization's policies and procedures for reporting your absence with as much notice as possible to ensure they have sufficient time to identify who will be providing care in your place.
13. Personnel who develop symptoms confirmed or suspected to be COVID-19 should call their provider for testing authorization.
  - a. The provider can have a testing request entered into the Indiana State Department of Health request form: <https://redcap.isdh.in.gov/surveys/?s=WMKD7PHEPF> .  
*Please note that this form is intended to be used only by healthcare providers, infection preventionists or other health care personnel.*
  - b. For questions, please call the ISDH line at 877-826-0011 (available 24/7) to have testing approved.
  - c. Providers also have the option to work with Lilly, LabCorp or Quest for commercial testing should they deem appropriate.
14. Personnel should also note that their local health department will be making contact with them if their test comes back positive and will instruct them on home monitoring of all close contacts.
15. Agency personnel should follow home quarantine recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-risk-assessment-hcp.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-risk-assessment-hcp.html) ) and return to work when the following conditions have been met:
  - a. Fever-free for at least 72 hours (three full days of no fever without the use of medicine that reduces fevers).  
**AND**
  - b. Other symptoms have improved (for example, your cough or shortness of breath have improved).  
**AND**
  - c. At least 7 days have passed since your symptoms first appeared.

### Additional information

General questions from the public or healthcare provider inquiries about COVID-19 may be directed to the ISDH COVID-19 Call Center at the toll-free number: 877-826-0011 (available 24/7).

Additional information and resources for COVID-19 are available at the links below.

- CDC COVID-19 webpage: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)
- ISDH COVID-19 webpage: <https://coronavirus.in.gov>
- Guidance for Infection Control and Prevention Concerning COVID-19 in Home Health Agencies (CMS): [www.cms.gov/files/document/qso-20-18-hha.pdf](http://www.cms.gov/files/document/qso-20-18-hha.pdf)
- Preventing the Spread of COVID-19 in Homes and Residential Communities - Recommended Precautions for Household Members, Intimate Partners and Caregivers (CDC): [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-prevent-spread.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-prevent-spread.html)
- Interim Guidance for Implementing Home Care of People Not Requiring Hospitalization for COVID-19 (CDC): [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-home-care.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-home-care.html)

*Adapted from the Indiana State Department of Health guidance.*