Keeping Family Safe If You Have or Might Have COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

If I have COVID-19, is it safe to be at home with my family?

- Yes, you can be safely at home with your family if you are sick with COVID-19, but you need to follow strict hygiene and distancing processes to avoid getting others sick
- Some people may be sick and transfer infection to others in the days before they know they are sick. Therefore, it is possible that your family has already been exposed to the virus by the time you were diagnosed. It is still important to follow the recommendations below.

How is COVID-19 transmitted?

- COVID-19 is transmitted is in one of two ways:
  - Directly breathe in droplets from a sick person OR
  - Touching something contaminated with the virus and then eating or touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unclean hands.
    - This happens when the sick person touches something which someone else then touches and transfers the virus to their eyes, nose, or mouth because they do not wash their hands. Remember that the virus often lives several hours, sometimes 1 or 2 days, on surfaces.

I have COVID-19 symptoms – how can I protect my family and others?

- The CDC has many resources to guide you through your illness. We strongly recommend you visit this website: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html.
- The following steps should be followed by you and your household members to reduce the risk of household members getting sick:

Physically Separate Yourself From Others:

- Keep a 6-foot distance from others in the home as much as possible
- Do not hug, kiss, or touch others while you are sick
- If available, stay in a different room from others in your home
- If available, use a separate bathroom

- Stay at home except for serious medical care:
  - Do not leave home to go to work, public areas, shopping, and do not use public transportation or taxis.
  - If you need groceries or supplies, ask family, friends, or neighbors bring it to you and leave it outside your door.

Follow Strict Hygiene Practices to Minimize Spread:
- You and all your household members should wash hands frequently
  - Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
  - Use soap or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer (60 to 95% alcohol) before and after touching your face or touching any other object someone else may need to touch (e.g. door handle, refrigerator).
  - When washing hands, be sure to cover all surfaces of your hands, including the fingertips, thumb, nails, and top of hands.
- Cover your cough and sneeze with a tissue, or sneeze into your sleeve
- If you are sick, wear a mask if you are in the same room as others
  - If you are unable to wear a mask, avoid being in the same room with others as much as possible and have your household members wear a mask when they are around you.
- If you are sick, everything you touch should be cleaned before someone else touches it. If someone else must touch something you touched (e.g. bringing plates out of your room), they need to wash their hands after they finish the activity and before they touch their face.
- Do not share household items (e.g., utensils, drinking glasses, towels, bedding) and either wash right away with soap/detergent after you use them.
- Avoid doing the dishes if you are coughing or sneezing.
  - If a family member is doing your dishes for you, they should wash the dishes with soap immediately to avoid leaving contaminated dishes that others may accidentally touch. They should clean their hands immediately afterwards.
  - If you wash your own dishes, clean all surfaces you touched after.
  - Another option is to use disposable products that don't require washing.
- Caregivers can use gloves when handling or cleaning soiled items that may contain your secretions or body fluids. If gloves are not available, clean hands thoroughly with soap and water after handling contaminated items.

Keep the Environment Clean:
- Household cleaning sprays and wipes can be used to kill COVID-19. Alcohol hand rub (60-95% alcohol) will also work.
- Use a disinfectant cleaner to clean things that you touch that others may touch.
  - Examples: counters, tables, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, and bedside tables that are touched by the person who is sick or someone caring for the sick person who touches these objects with unclean hands
- Immediately clean any surfaces that may have oral/nasal secretions, blood, stool, or body fluids on them.

- Wash clothes/linens thoroughly – over-the-counter laundry detergent will kill the virus. Dry thoroughly using the temperatures recommended on the linen/clothing label.
- If weather permits, air out rooms when the sick person is not in the room.

What if I live with someone who is immunocompromised or elderly?
- People who have chronic illnesses, have weakened immune systems, or are ≥65 years old are at higher risk for serious complications from COVID-19.
- In addition to strictly following the above strategies, you can also consider additional steps to avoid contact with vulnerable household members' environment or touched objects as much as possible. These high-risk individuals can also consider masking while in the house. If they mask, they should be careful to only touch the mask or their face after washing their hands with soap or using alcohol hand rub.
- Another option is that these high-risk persons can temporarily live with someone else until the person infected with COVID is fully recovered without symptoms for at least 7 days. However, if these high-risk individuals have already been in contact with the ill person at the time they move out, they will need to be attentive for any symptoms of COVID-19 for the next 14 days.

Do I need to move out of the house if I have COVID-19?
- Please refer to Page 1 of the file called **"I have COVID-19 symptoms – how can I protect my family and others?"** for best practice guidelines for keeping members of the household safe.
- Healthcare workers may make the personal decision to move out, if resources or opportunities are available.

How long will I be infectious to others?
- How long you can be infectious to another person can vary based on your symptoms and the status of your immune system. This information is not yet fully known.
- The chance of someone getting sick from you also depends on how vulnerable other household members are (if they have a weak immune system or are elderly).
- Ask your doctor for advice on when you are no longer infectious to others. Generally, people are not considered infectious if
  - at least 10 days have passed since your first symptoms began
  - at least 24 hours have passed without a fever of >99F, without using fever-reducing medicines
  - you are feeling much better
  - *NOTE: If your COVID illness involved hospitalization for difficulty breathing, or you are "immunocompromised" due to cancer chemotherapy, organ transplant, or medications that reduce your ability to fight infection, CDC recommends that you consider yourself infectious until **20 days have passed** since first symptoms began AND symptoms have greatly improved AND you have not had any temperature > 99F for 24 hours without fever-reducing medications.

Where can I go to learn more?

- Ask your doctor
- Refer to the **OC Nursing Home COVID-19 Infection Prevention Toolkit** for more information and additional FAQs at ucihealth.org/stopcovid
- Up to date information on 2019 Novel Coronavirus can be found at:
    - The Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) (www.cdc.gov)
    - California Department of Public Health (CDPH) (www.cdph.ca.gov)
    - Orange County Health Care Agency: (www.ochealthinfo.com)