

PRACTICAL TIPS FOR PROTECTING YOUR FAMILY FROM COVID-19

Fredia Wadley, MD, Talbot County Health Officer

PARENTS

If someone in your family develops fever and flu-like symptoms, please

- Keep that person at home
- Call your health care provider and get directions for what to do next
- Please don't go directly to your health provider, but call first
- Please don't go to the Emergency Department unless the sick person is having trouble breathing

Many cases of COVID 19 are mild to moderate and do not require anything other than symptomatic treatment (drink liquids, take something for fever if needed, take something across the counter for cold symptoms). If you are unable to contact your health provider, the CDC guidelines are as follows:

- The sick person should stay home and you should follow the suggestions for home care
- If any other members of the family develop symptoms and fever, they should stay home
- The sick may stop isolation once
 1. Their symptoms are improving
 2. They have had no fever (and are not taking anything for fever) for 72 hours, and
 3. It has been at least 7 days since the symptoms startedThis means that isolations will never be less than 7 days but may be longer than 7 days depending upon how many days a person has fever.
- Individuals over 60 years of age especially with chronic health conditions and anyone with a weakened immune system (cancer treatment, on steroids, and other conditions that your health care provider has told you affects your immune system) should be more careful and check with your health care provider if you develop any flu-like symptoms.

TAKING CARE OF A SICK FAMILY MEMBER WITH COVID 19 OR A PERSON WITH FEVER AND FLU-LIKE SYMPTOMS THAT HAS NOT SEEN A HEALTH PROVIDER

- Keep the sick person in a room by themselves if possible
- Monitor temperature and symptoms and call health care provider if symptoms worsen
- Keep a mask on the infected person, if possible, to decrease exposure risk. If you do not have a surgical mask, then use a handkerchief like a bandana. This will stop large droplets from getting into the air when a sick person coughs.
- Decrease contact with other members of the family
- Wipe down the surfaces in the room of the patients and have them wash their hands or use sanitizer often

- Keep dishes and objects touched by patient from others in family. Immediately wash dishes in hot soapy water.
 - Caretaker should practice hand hygiene every time they leave the room (wash hands NO LESS THAN 20 seconds or use sanitizer before exiting the room every time)
 - Dispose of soiled tissues in plastic lined trash can; tie a knot in the plastic and dispose of this bag in outside garbage can. Don't leave these lying around.
 - A couple of times each day (at least) wipe with a disinfectant the surfaces in the home that get a lot of traffic and hand contact (stair rails, kitchen counter, etc..)
 - If you run out of disinfectant wipes, make your own: 5 tablespoons (or 1/4 cup) of bleach in 1 gallon of water). My mother used more because she loved bleach, but the Centers for Disease Control say this will disinfect and kill viruses and not be so hard on your hands and surfaces.)
- **TAKING CARE OF A SMALL CHILD – children can get COVID 19 but usually have a mild illness. However, they can infect others in the family.**
 - The mother or someone will need to stay in the room a great deal of the time if the child is very small. It is better for only one person to be the care giver.
 - The child may not tolerate a mask, and if not, then the care taker can wear the mask or bandana while in the room with the child. When you exit leave the mask in the room. Wash it in soapy water once a day.
 - Wipe down the surfaces, handles, and door knobs of the room
 - Disinfect objects in the child's room; wash the teddy bear or plushy animal if possible
 - Use the same hand sanitizer every time you leave the room of the child to keep from spreading the virus outside the room. If you don't have sanitizer and or adjoining bathroom, wash your hands immediately upon leaving the room.

WHY DO WE STAY 6 FEET FROM OTHER PEOPLE?

- When an infected person breathes out, water droplets go into the air that have virus particles in them.
- If the person sneezes or coughs, those water droplets come out of mouth or nose with force but usually do not travel 6 feet.
- The droplets settle out of the air rather quickly. But that leaves virus on the surfaces of objects under and within 6 feet of the person.
- That is why you disinfect surfaces if someone at home is sick. You use sanitizer on your hands before you leave the sick room, but you disinfect surfaces in other rooms because you might have brought some virus out of the sick room and then touched a knob, counter surface, or handle and left the virus there.

YOU CAN DO A LOT AT HOME TO PROTECT YOUR FAMILY!