Health Enews

Tips to Protecting Yourself if Someone in Your Home Has COVID–19

Because the total number of cases of COVID-19 in the United States is well over 1 million, it is important for us to be prepared on how to protect ourselves and other family members should someone in our household become diagnosed with COVID-19.

While many details and facts about COVID-19 are changing on a daily basis, there are facts that haven't changed. COVID-19 is primarily spread from person-to-person through respiratory droplets. If you are within a minimum of 6 feet of an ill person, it is likely that you may breath in some of the respiratory droplets. The droplets occur when someone coughs, sneezes or speaks (these droplets are not visible to the naked eye). Additionally, the droplets may fall onto commonly touched surfaces: cell phones, laptops, desks, door knobs, handles—just to name a few. Then, someone comes along and touches the contaminated surface and unsuspectedly rubs their nose, eyes, or mouth and becomes exposed to COVID-19.

If someone in your home becomes ill with COVID-19, it's important to protect all members of your household from becoming ill as well. Tips to protect yourself and other household members include:

- Separate yourself. Limit contact with the ill person as much as possible—while still caring for the person who is ill. If you can stay in a separate area of the house and use a different bedroom and bathroom, that would be ideal.

- Make sure that you have good ventilation—like an open window. Doctors have discovered that the respiratory droplets can linger in the air for several hours.

- Separate commonly used items. Items such as dishes, utensils, cups, towels and bedding should be thoroughly washed with hot water and bleach (when appropriate). Use disposable gloves when handling contaminated items. Also, the ill person should use the same items after thoroughly cleaned vs. mixing the items other household members may use.

- Use a lined trash can to dispose of the ill person's trash separately than other trash.

- Disinfect and clean frequently. Items to daily disinfect include: countertops, refrigerator handles, tabletops, doorknobs, cabinet and drawer hardware, desks, bedside tables, light switches, remote controls, computer/tablets/keyboards, headphones, cell phones, sink faucets, toilet handles, and soap dispensers. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has a list of cleaning products that are safe to use around the house. Also, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) offers tips on how to effectively clean.

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- If sharing a bathroom with an ill household member, disinfect the area after each use. Wear a mask and gloves and wait as long as possible before entering to clean the bathroom.

- Wear a face mask and gloves when interacting with the ill household member. Also, the ill person should wear a mask when anyone is in their area.

- Minimize face-to-face and hand-to-hand contact by placing meals and drinks outside of the door vs. handing the items directly to the ill person.

- Maintain open communication with the ill person's physician. Keep the physician updated on current symptoms to determine if hospitalization is needed.

- If you are living with someone who has COVID-19, it's important to quarantine yourself for a minimum of 14 days.

- Monitor your own health for symptoms for COVID-19.

* It's important to stay current with all information and guideance provided by the

CDC, your physician, and your local health deparment. *

https://www.shape.com/lifestyle/mind-and-body/how-to-look-after-someone-with-coronavirus

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/care-for-someone.html

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