

CAREGIVER INSTRUCTIONS – RESPIRATORY ILLNESS

(For suspected or confirmed COVID-19 **ADULT** patients)

The doctor and public health staff have determined that the patient can be discharged from the hospital and monitored at home. It is important for you to understand the following information to help the patient with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 follow their doctor's instructions for medicine(s) and care.

Please read these instructions carefully, as they describe the things that you can do to take care of yourself and others in your household, to monitor the patient's health, and when to return to normal activities.

IMPORTANT STEPS TO FOLLOW

When leaving the hospital – going home:

- Make sure the patient wears a mask when leaving the hospital until they get home. The staff will provide one for you.
- Do not use public transportation.
- It is best for you and the patient to walk home if you live within walking distance and feel well enough to walk home.
- If you have to take a car, have the patient wear a mask and leave the window open.
- After you arrive home, ask the patient to stay home and not to go out.

Ask the patient to stay home unless he/she needs urgent medical care:

- Help with basic needs in home and provide support for getting groceries, prescriptions, and other personal needs. Have the patient wear a mask when around other people.
- Ask the patient not go to work, school, or public areas, such as stores or movie theaters, or social gatherings.
- If the patient has a scheduled medical/dental appointment, try to reschedule the appointment and go when he/she is well.
- Avoid having visitors until the patient is well.

Separate the patient from others and pets at home:

- If available, have the patient stay in a separate bedroom and use a separate bathroom.
- Care for the patient's pets. Minimize patient contact with their pets.

Hand hygiene:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds (sing "Happy Birthday" to yourself while washing hands). You can use hand sanitizer containing alcohol if soap and water is not available.
- If using hand sanitizer with alcohol, cover all surfaces of your hands and rub hands together until dry.
- Use soap and water if your hands look dirty.

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth. Clean your hands if you do touch your face.
- Try to minimize physical contact; avoid hand-shaking.
- Have the patient wash their hands often.

Respiratory hygiene:

- Always have a tissue available for the patient to cover their mouth and nose when he/she coughs and sneezes. If a tissue is not available, ask them to cough or sneeze into their upper sleeve (not hands).
- Throw tissues away in trashcan that has a bag in it. Empty your trash daily.
- **ALWAYS** wash your hands after you throw away the tissue or garbage.
- **No smoking or vaping** around the patient. Nicotine and other chemicals in cigarettes and cigars can make symptoms worse.

Do not share household items:

- Do not share cups, plates, eating utensils, towels, bedding, or clothes
- Always wash these items thoroughly with soap and water after use.

Clean “often touched” surfaces each day:

- Clean surfaces, such as counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables, with household cleaner with bleach, according to the label instructions.
- Clean immediately any surfaces that have blood, stool, or body fluids on them.

Other cleaning instructions:

- Wear a facemask and gloves if you touch any blood, stool, or body fluids, such as saliva, sputum, nasal mucus, vomit, or urine.
- Immediately remove and wash clothes or bedding that have blood, stool, or body fluids on them.
- Wear gloves while handling soiled items and keep soiled items away from your body.
- Follow the sequence below to remove personal protective items:
 - Step 1: remove and dispose of gloves in a container that has a bag in it
 - Step 2: wash your hands
 - Step 3: remove and dispose of facemask in the same container
 - Step 4: wash your hands
- After the patient uses items, such as dishes, drinking glasses, cups, or eating utensils, wash them thoroughly with soap and water.
- Place patient’s laundry in a washable bag. Read and follow directions on labels of laundry and detergent. Use normal laundry detergent according to washing machine instructions and dry thoroughly using the warmest temperatures recommended on the clothing label.

Monitor the patient’s symptoms:

- Monitor the patient’s symptoms. Seek medical attention right away if the patient’s symptoms get worse, such as difficulty breathing, shortness of breath, new confusion or inability to arouse, or bluish lips or face.
- Before you seek care, call the doctor and explain that the patient has COVID-19 or is being evaluated for COVID-19.
- Put on a facemask for the patient before entering the facility.

- *These steps will help the doctor's office to keep other people in the office or waiting room from getting infected or exposed.*
- For a medical emergency, call 911 and notify the EMS personnel that the patient has or is being evaluated for COVID-19. Put a facemask on the patient before emergency medical services arrive.

Call ahead before visiting your doctor:

- If the patient has a medical or dental appointment, call the doctor or dentist and tell them that the patient has or is being evaluated for COVID-19.
 - *This will help the doctor's office decide if the appointment can be rescheduled or take steps to keep other people from getting infected or exposed.*

When to end home isolation if the patient is positive for COVID-19:

- The patient should stay on home isolation until these 3 things have happened:
 1. The patient has no fever for at least 72 hours (3 full days) without taking medicines that treat fever like Tylenol or aspirin.
 2. The patient's other symptoms, such as cough, have improved.
 3. At least 7 days have passed since the patient's symptoms started.

For more information:

- Visit the CDC website at www.cdc.gov or the NewYork-Presbyterian website at www.nyp.org.
- Call the NewYork-Presbyterian COVID-19 hotline at 646-697-4000.