



Department
of Health

Mike DeWine, Governor
Jon Husted, Lt. Governor

Amy Acton, M.D., MPH, Director

March 12, 2020

Dear Ohio Long-Term Care Facility Administrators,

With Ohio reporting its first positive cases of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), it is important that we take steps to prevent its spread, and you can help support these efforts.

In an effort to slow the spread of COVID-19, on March 11, 2020, Director of Health Dr. Amy Acton issued an order regarding access to nursing homes and requiring screening in accordance with guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and the Ohio Department of Health. Screening shall include both questions about exposure to COVID-19 and assessing visitors and personnel for cough, shortness of breath and body temperatures of 100.4 degrees and higher. In cases where emergency medical personnel are called to the facility please use a reasonable and balanced approach to assess the risk to other residents to allow the emergency management personnel to treat the resident in distress. A copy of the order was sent to each licensed nursing home and residential care facility through the EIDC system on March 11, 2020. Please contact the Department if you need a copy of the Order. Please be advised that this Order represents the minimum requirements for long-term care facilities, who may enact more stringent requirements.

Survey staff will also expect to be screened prior to admission to nursing homes and residential care facilities. In addition, please be assured that the Department is also monitoring the health of our staff.

While the Department understands that preventing the spread of COVID-19 is important, please make sure that the health care needs of your residents are being met and that contracted health care providers are being given access to the facility if eligible after screening, particularly hospice providers.

In addition to the Order, there are additional resources that may assist you as you develop procedures and plans to protect your residents, personnel and visitors.

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has issued revised "Guidance for Infection Control and Prevention of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Nursing Homes" available at <https://www.cms.gov/medicareprovider-enrollment-and-certificationsurveycertificationgeninfopolicy-and/guidance-infection-control-and-prevention-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19-nursing-homes-revised>.

Topics addressed by the revised guidance include how nursing homes should monitor or limit visitors who are showing symptoms of illness, monitor and restrict staff with potential illness, transfer a patient who has tested positive or is suspected of having COVID-19, and accept a patient from a hospital

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following a COVID-19 diagnosis. It also offers a list of frequently asked questions with detailed answers about some specific areas related to COVID-19.

The American Health Care Association and the National Center for Assisted Living offer [Steps to Prevent COVID-19 from Entering Your Facility](#), a guide they prepared which contains newly-worded guidance on restricting visitors. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's COVID-19 webpage contains resources for health care facilities, including "Strategies to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19 in Long-Term Care Facilities" at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/healthcare-facilities/prevent-spread-in-long-term-care-facilities.html>.

Attached are flyers from the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) that you can share with your employees and post in your facilities consisting of a COVID-19 key FAQ and tips for preventing the spread of germs that can cause infectious diseases. For up to date COVID-19 information and other resources, go to www.coronavirus.ohio.gov, which is maintained by ODH.

If you have questions, concerns, or suggestions, please contact the Ohio Department of Health's Bureau of Survey and Certification at (614) 752-9524.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rebecca Sandholdt". The signature is stylized and includes a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Rebecca Sandholdt
Chief, Bureau of Survey & Certification

Please continue to protect yourself from all infectious diseases by using these precautions.

PREVENTION

For additional information visit coronavirus.ohio.gov.



STAY HOME
WHEN YOU ARE
SICK



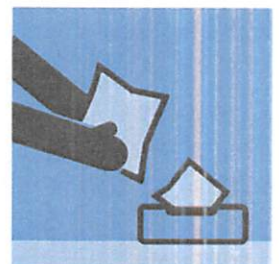
AVOID CONTACT
WITH PEOPLE
WHO ARE SICK



GET ADEQUATE SLEEP
AND EAT WELL-
BALANCED
MEALS



WASH HANDS OFTEN
WITH WATER AND SOAP
(20 SECONDS
OR LONGER)



DRY HANDS WITH
A CLEAN TOWEL
OR AIR DRY
YOUR HANDS



COVER YOUR MOUTH
WITH A TISSUE OR
SLEEVE WHEN
COUGHING OR SNEEZING



AVOID TOUCHING
YOUR EYES, NOSE,
OR MOUTH WITH
UNWASHED HANDS
OR AFTER
TOUCHING SURFACES



CLEAN AND DISINFECT
"HIGH-TOUCH"
SURFACES OFTEN



CALL BEFORE VISITING
YOUR DOCTOR



PRACTICE GOOD
HYGIENE HABITS

CLEAN ALL "HIGH-TOUCH" SURFACES EVERY DAY

High touch surfaces include counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables. Also, clean any surfaces that may have blood, stool, or body fluids on them. Use a household cleaning spray or wipe according to the label instructions. Labels contain instructions for safe and effective use of the cleaning product including precautions you should take when applying the product, such as wearing gloves and making sure you have good ventilation during use of the product.

COVID-19 Checklist for Long-Term Care Facilities

Top 5 Things You Can Do to Protect Against COVID-19

Ohio Department of Health Director Amy Acton, M.D., MPH, has ordered that all long-term care facilities **restrict visitation to one visitor per resident per day, to keep a log of all visitors, and to assess visitors for COVID-19 symptoms (fever, cough, or shortness of breath) and other risk factors, denying entry to those who exhibit them.**

Dr. Acton also strongly recommends that all long-term care facilities immediately take the following actions:

- Reduce risks presented by visitors and implement methods to reduce isolation.** Direct visitors to wash their hands before proceeding to their visit. Implement a communal laptop that residents can use for video chatting with visitors unable to come; disinfect between uses.
- Allow sick employees to stay home.** Screen employees at the start of their shifts and send home anyone who has signs or symptoms of COVID-19. Develop sick leave policies that allow employees to stay home if they have symptoms or a respiratory infection.
- Encourage good cough etiquette and hand hygiene.** Retrain staff and residents on hand-washing and cough etiquette. Ensure staff wash their hands before and after every interaction with each resident. Consider posting visual reminders of proper hand-washing and cough etiquette. Place alcohol-based sanitizer both inside and outside of patient rooms, and make sure tissues are available.
- Separate ill residents to limit spread of disease.** Separate residents with respiratory symptoms (see above) from other residents; however do not allow residents with symptoms to interact unless the cause of their illness is confirmed to be the same.

- Increase cleaning.** Increase the frequency of cleaning of shared surfaces with EPA-approved cleaning products. Limit sharing of medical equipment.

For additional information, visit coronavirus.ohio.gov.

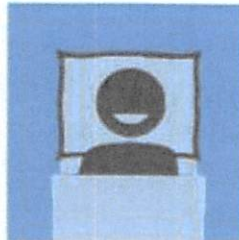
For answers to your COVID-19 questions, call 1-833-4ASKODH (1-833-427-5634).



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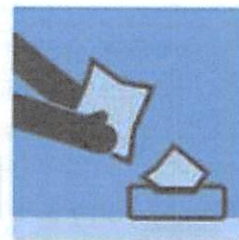
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FAQs

For additional information, please visit coronavirus.ohio.gov

Q: What is coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)?

A: COVID-19, or coronavirus disease 2019, is an upper respiratory tract disease caused by one of the seven coronaviruses known to infect humans. It was first identified in humans in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, in December 2019. The virus that causes COVID-19 is called SARS-CoV-2.

Q: Who is at risk?

A: People who recently traveled to China, South Korea, Japan, Iran, or Italy, and people who care for patients with COVID-19 are at highest risk.

Q: What are the symptoms?

A: Symptoms, which generally appear two to 14 days after exposure, include fever, cough, and difficulty breathing. Most people who become sick do not require hospitalization, but older adults, people with chronic health conditions, and people with compromised immune systems are more likely to require more advanced care.

Q: How does it spread?

A: Coronaviruses are generally thought to be spread most often by respiratory droplets. The virus that causes coronavirus disease 2019 is spreading from person-to-person and someone who is actively sick with the disease can spread the illness to others. That is why CDC recommends that these patients be isolated either in the hospital or at home until they are better and no longer pose a risk of infecting others.

Q: What can I do to prevent it?

A: There are no vaccines to prevent COVID-19. Implement the personal prevention protection methods used to prevent flu and other infectious diseases:

- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds; dry hands with a clean towel or air dry hands.
- Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer when soap and water are unavailable.
- Cover your mouth with a tissue or sleeve when sneezing or coughing.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Avoid contact with people who are sick.

Also, clean high-touch areas – counters, tables, doorknobs, light switches, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, nightstands – every day using household cleaning spray or wipes according to label directions.

Q: Where is it spreading?

A: While the COVID-19 outbreak began in China, it is now spreading worldwide, threatening to cause a pandemic. Sustained, ongoing person-to-person spread in the community is occurring in some international locations. In the U.S., several instances of infection with the virus that causes COVID-19 have occurred in people with no travel history and no known source of exposure in several states. This has raised the level of concern about the immediate threat of COVID-19 for certain communities.

Q: Should I wear a face mask?

A: The use of face masks by people who are not sick is not recommended to protect against respiratory diseases. Face masks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent spread of the disease and by health care workers and others taking care of someone in a close setting.

Q: Is it still safe to travel internationally?

A: The U.S. Department of State is advising against travel to China and Iran due to COVID-19 outbreaks and advising that travelers reconsider plans to go to South Korea and Italy. Increased caution is advised in traveling to Japan (Level 2 advisory).

Q: What should I do if I had contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19?

A: Detailed information for people who have had close contact with a person confirmed to have, or being evaluated for, COVID-19 are available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [here](#).

Q: Should I get tested for COVID-19?

A: Call a health care professional if you develop a fever or symptoms of respiratory illness -- such as cough or shortness of breath -- within 14 days of travel from China, South Korea, Japan, Iran, or Italy, or within 14 days of close contact with a COVID-19 patient. Testing is also advised for people who have severe, acute lower respiratory illness requiring hospitalization, and no other diagnosis to explain the symptoms.

Q: Will warm weather stop the outbreak of COVID-19?

A: It is not yet known whether weather and temperature impact the spread of COVID-19. Some other viruses, like the common cold and flu, spread more during cold weather months, but that does not mean it is impossible to become sick with these viruses during other months. At this time, it is not known whether the spread of COVID-19 will decrease when weather becomes warmer.