

November 30, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

There is increasing evidence that exposure to SARS-CoV-2 within households is one of the most common and important risk factors for COVID-19, underscoring the importance of prevention measures in the home. Given that infectiousness appears to be highest starting approximately two days before symptom onset and during the following week, and transmission can originate from asymptomatic persons, it is critical for patients to promptly initiate prevention measures when COVID-19 is suspected, diagnosed, or an exposure is identified.

Findings from studies on household transmission include the following:<sup>1,2,3,4</sup>

- Transmission of SARS-CoV-2 to household members is common; studies have found secondary transmission rates ranging from approximately 15% to 50% within households.
- Most secondary transmission occurs early in the patient's course of illness.
- Both children and adults can transmit SARS-CoV-2 to household contacts.

### **Preventing household transmission**

Isolation should begin as soon as symptoms develop, or a positive diagnostic test result is received. Delaying isolation increases the likelihood of transmission to other household members. Similarly, quarantine should be initiated immediately after someone learns they have been exposed to COVID-19 or returns from an area that is subject to [NYS travel quarantine restrictions](#).

Individuals who do not live alone should strongly consider completing isolation or quarantine outside their home, especially if they cannot separate from others or live with people who have risk factors for severe COVID-19. The [Take Care Hotel Program](#) is available to help make this possible.

Individuals isolating or quarantining at home and who live with others should:

- Use a separate bedroom and bathroom from other household members, whenever possible.

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1. Grijalva CG, Rolfes MA, Zhu Y, et al. Transmission of SARS-COV-2 infections in households — Tennessee and Wisconsin, April – September 2020. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep.* 2020;69(44):1631-1634. <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6944e1>

2. Lopez AS, Hill M, Antezano J, et al. Transmission dynamics of COVID-19 outbreaks associated with child care facilities — Salt Lake City, Utah, April – July 2020. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep.* 2020;69(37):1319-1323. <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6937e3>

3. Lewis NM, Chu VT, Ye D, et al. Household transmission of SARS-CoV-2 in the United States. *Clin Infect Dis.* Published online August 16, 2020; ciaa1166. <https://doi.org/10.1093/cid/ciaa1166>

4. Jing QL, Liu MJ, Zhang ZB, et al. Household secondary attack rate of COVID-19 and associated determinants in Guangzhou, China: a retrospective cohort study. *Lancet Infect Dis.* 2020;20(10):1141-1150. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1473-3099\(20\)30471-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1473-3099(20)30471-0)

- Maintain at least 6 feet of distance from others at all times, including household members.
- Wear a face covering while in shared areas of the home and encourage other household members to do so, even if 6 feet of distance is maintained.
  - There is growing scientific evidence that, in addition to providing effective source control, face coverings can prevent wearers from inhalational exposure to SARS-CoV-2, potentially preventing transmission.<sup>5</sup>
- Follow good hand hygiene practices, including washing hands regularly.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces, such as counters, doorknobs, and phones. Clean them after each use and at least once every day.

### **Resources to support isolation and quarantine**

New York City (NYC) and State (NYS) offer several resources to support safe and effective isolation and quarantine.

- **Take Care Hotel Program:** The Test and Trace Corps offers a hotel room free of charge for up to 14 days so that people with COVID-19 and close contacts can complete isolation or quarantine away from other household members. The program offers private rooms with bathrooms; free transportation, meals, and WiFi; COVID-19 testing; and on-site medical support. To book a hotel room, call 212-COVID19 (212-268-4319). You can also share [this flyer](#) with your patients.
- **Take Care Package:** The Test and Trace Corps provides care packages to all people with COVID-19 and their close contacts to help them if they choose to isolate or quarantine at home. Packages contain personal medical-grade masks, at-home COVID-19 diagnostic specimen collection kits, a pulse oximeter, a thermometer, hand sanitizer, and sanitizing wipes.
- **GetFood Program:** The Test and Trace Corps can connect people to emergency food home-delivery services. Vegetarian, kosher, and halal options are available.
- **Paid Family Leave:** Under NYS law, a person who must miss work because of COVID-19 may be eligible for paid sick leave. This includes people who were isolated because they or their minor child tested positive (or had symptoms of COVID-19) or were quarantined because they were exposed to someone who had COVID-19. People can call 855-491-2667 to request a quarantine or isolation order. The person requesting leave will then need to submit the order to their employer along with supporting documentation. For more information, visit [PaidFamilyLeave.ny.gov/COVID19](https://PaidFamilyLeave.ny.gov/COVID19).

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5. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Scientific Brief: Community Use of Cloth Masks to Control the Spread of SARS-CoV-2. Updated November 20, 2020. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/more/masking-science-sars-cov2.html>

- **Methadone delivery:** The NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene provides patients who treat opiate use disorder with methadone with the option to have their medication delivered to their home or a Take Care hotel. Hotel staff will make these arrangements on behalf of their guests. Your patient should contact their outpatient treatment provider directly to arrange home delivery.
- **Connection to care and resources:** The Test and Trace Corps can facilitate connection to a primary care provider, medication delivery, and social services, including housing advocacy, assistance with utilities, and more. To access resources available through the Test and Trace Corps, call 212-COVID19 (212-268-4319). You can also share [this flyer](#) with your patients.

### Guidance for patients

The following materials should be shared with patients as appropriate:

- [What To Do When You Have COVID-19](#) (additional languages available [here](#))
- [FAQ About Face Coverings](#) (additional languages available [here](#))
- [Traveling During COVID-19 Quarantine FAQ](#) (additional languages available [here](#))
- [COVID-19 Testing FAQ](#) (additional languages available [here](#))

Educating your patients on how to prevent household transmission is an important step toward breaking chains of COVID-19 transmission in NYC.

Thank you for your ongoing collaboration.

Sincerely,



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