



T13: Managing symptoms in a household

Why is this important to you

Most people who get sick with COVID-19 will have only mild or moderate illness and should recover at home.

Source: [WHO](#)

It is reported that less than 1 in 20 people aged less than 50 years with COVID-19 needed hospital care in a recent study and, for most of us, the safest and the most comfortable place to recover from the virus is in our own household.

Source: [The Lancet](#)

Care at home can help stop the spread of the virus and help protect people who are at risk for getting seriously ill from COVID-19.

Older adults and people of any age with certain serious underlying medical conditions like lung disease, heart disease or diabetes are at higher risk for developing more serious complications from COVID-19 illness and should seek care as soon as symptoms start.

If you are caring for someone at home, it is very important to monitor for emergency signs, check to see if symptoms are worsening, prevent the spread of germs, help manage symptoms, and carefully consider when to consult with a healthcare professional.

Older people and vulnerable people (with certain serious underlying medical conditions like lung disease, heart disease or diabetes) should not manage their COVID-19 alone by relying on written advice.

Source: [CDC](#), [WHO](#)

Red Flag symptoms

- Severe shortness of breath at rest
- Difficulty breathing
- Pain or pressure in the chest
- Cold, clammy, pale or mottled skin
- New confusion
- Becoming difficult to rouse
- Blue lips or face
- Little or no urine output
- Coughing up blood

Source: [BMJ](#)



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What You Need

- Thermometer (if not available use the back of your hand as described in 'Checking for Symptoms of a Fever' on [WikiHow](#))
- Face masks for both the infected person and the carer (T3i Face Masks)
- Printed symptom tracker provided in [T10: Check Severity of Coronavirus Symptoms](#) or an online tool like that provided by the UK group [Patient Access](#)



- Pen and paper
- Access to telephone, smartphone or computer for phone call or video consultation with local healthcare professional
- Emergency contact number or telemedicine details for your local healthcare system
- Address and directions to your nearest emergency department
- Access to basic medication, food and water
- Review also [T6: Household Quarantine Area](#) and [T10: Check Severity of Coronavirus Symptoms](#)

What you need to do

- Nominate someone to regularly monitor changes in symptoms of the person in quarantine with suspected COVID-19
- Make sure the person in quarantine has their usual medication unless advised not to by their doctor
- Make sure the person in quarantine has enough water and food
- Practice social distancing



- Regularly clean the quarantine area and any areas shared with the rest of the household

Monitor symptoms

- Conduct twice daily temperature checks
- Use the symptom trackers in [T10: Check Severity of Coronavirus Symptoms](#)
- Monitor for worsening of any symptoms or the appearance of new symptoms

Know what to do if symptoms become rapidly moderate or any severe symptoms appear

Let your doctor know right away if symptoms worsen. For most people, symptoms last a few days and get better after a week. However, it is possible that their symptoms become more severe with time, so it is very important to keep monitoring for any worsening symptoms. See also:

[T10: Check Severity of Coronavirus Symptoms](#)

[T11: Speaking with a Healthcare Professional about Coronavirus Symptoms](#)

COVID-19 symptoms can worsen swiftly

If the person in quarantine has symptoms that are worsening, seek advice. This is particularly critical if that person has severe symptoms. People with COVID-19, particularly those in risk groups, can progress from mild to moderate to severe symptoms.

If you are afraid, please seek advice. That is what health professionals are there for.

Source: [Patient info](#)

Treatment and Medication

Currently, no antiviral medication is approved to treat COVID-19. Any medication is directed at relieving symptoms and may include:

- Pain relievers (ibuprofen or acetaminophen)
- Cough syrup or medication

Is it safe to take over the counter medication (eg. NSAIDS) to treat symptoms of COVID-19?

If you are not allergic to NSAIDs, yes, but keep yourself informed.

There is currently no evidence establishing a link between NSAIDs (e.g., ibuprofen, naproxen) and worsening of COVID-19. Worldwide health agencies are continuing to monitor the situation and will review new information on the effects of NSAIDs and COVID-19 disease as it becomes available.

Since some doctors remain concerned about NSAIDs, it still seems prudent to choose acetaminophen first. However, if you suspect or know you have COVID-19 and cannot take



acetaminophen, or have taken the maximum dose and still need symptom relief, taking over-the-counter ibuprofen does not need to be specifically avoided.

Patients who have any questions should speak to their doctor or pharmacist. There is currently no reason for patients taking ibuprofen to interrupt their treatment, based on the above. This is particularly important for patients taking ibuprofen or other NSAID medicines for chronic diseases.

Source: [FDA](#)

Blood Pressure Medication

Regular medication, including ACE inhibitors and angiotensin receptor blockers, should be continued.

The ESC Council on Hypertension strongly recommend that physicians and patients should continue treatment with their usual anti-hypertensive therapy because there is no clinical or scientific evidence to suggest that treatment with angiotensin converting enzyme inhibitors (ACE-i) or Angiotensin Receptor Blockers (ARBs) should be discontinued because of the Covid-19 infection. Cardiovascular disease patients who are diagnosed with COVID-19 should be fully evaluated by a healthcare professional before adding or removing any treatments, and any changes to their treatment should be based on the latest scientific evidence.

Source: [ESC](#), [CDC](#)

Water and Food

Make sure the sick person in quarantine drinks 3 to 4 liters, 6 to 8 pints, to stay hydrated and rests at home.

Source: [NASEM](#)



Protective Measures

HOW TO PRACTICE SOCIAL DISTANCING

 <p>NO HANDSHAKES OR HUGS</p>	 <p>KEEP YOUR DISTANCE ✓ (about 6 feet 2 metres)</p>	 <p>WORK REMOTELY ✓</p>
 <p>AVOID CROWDS</p>	 <p>STAY AT HOME ✓</p>	 <p>WASH YOUR HANDS ✓</p>



THE BEST WAY TO WASH YOUR HANDS

1. Wet your hands with water.



2. Grab enough soap to cover all surfaces of your hands.



3. Rub your hands palm-to-palm.



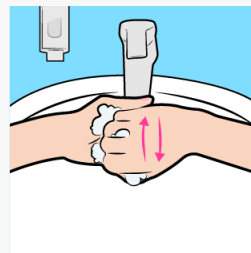
4. Rub your right palm over the back of your left hand, interlacing fingers, and vice versa.



5. Rub your hands palm-to-palm with interlaced fingers.



6. Rub the backs of your fingers against the opposite palm so that your hands are interlocked.



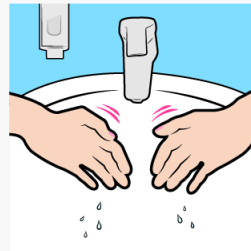
7. Rub your left thumb in your right palm, and vice versa.



8. Rub your right-hand finger tips against your left palm, and vice versa.



9. Rinse, dry, and you're done!



SOURCE: World Health Organization

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