The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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Information and Guidance for Persons in Isolation due to COVID-19

You are required to isolate (separate yourself) from other people because you have been diagnosed as a confirmed case of infection with 2019 Novel (new) Coronavirus (COVID-19) or because you had a high-risk exposure to COVID-19 and now have symptoms.

COVID-19 is caused by a virus. It is spread through respiratory secretions (mucous and droplets from coughs and sneezes from an infected person and can cause serious illness such as pneumonia (lung infection), and in some rare cases, death.

You must remain in isolation until a public health authority (the Massachusetts Department of Public Health or your local Board of Health) tells you can leave your home. A public health authority will be in contact with you daily and will conduct another assessment 14 days after the date your infection is confirmed. A public health authority will confirm that you may leave your home once the risk of infecting others is determined to be low.

During the isolation period, you may not have visitors in the location where you are isolating. If you must share living quarters with another person, then that person will be subject to quarantine. If someone in your home is a young child, pregnant, immunocompromised, or has a chronic heart, liver, lung, or kidney condition, or is over 65 years of age, that person is at particular risk if they have contact with you during isolation. If anyone you have contact with fits this description, please discuss this with your local board of health or the Massachusetts Department of public health so that steps may be taken to protect these individuals.

Your local Board of Health and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health will work with you to identify anybody, including household members, who are considered to have been exposed and will make required quarantine recommendations.

This information sheet provides you with information about what *to do* and *not to do* while you are in isolation. If you have questions after reading this, you can call your local Board of Health, or the Massachusetts Department of Public Health which is available 24/7 at 617-983-6800.

While you are in isolation you should follow these instructions:

1. Do not leave your home except for urgent medical care. If you must leave your home for urgent medical care, wear a mask, such as a surgical mask, if available. If not available try to maintain a distance of six feet from others; when this is not possible, limit your time being closer to people to five minutes or less. Call the healthcare provider before you go and tell them that you have COVID-19 infection. For the protection of others, you should use a personal car or call an ambulance to travel to your healthcare provider. **Do not take public transportation, ride shares (e.g. Uber or Lyft), or taxis under any circumstance**.
2. Wear a mask, such as a surgical mask, if available if you must be in contact with another person. If not available try to maintain a distance of six feet from others; when this is not possible, limit your time being closer to people to five minutes or less.
3. Do not have visitors in your home.
4. If possible, other people should not be living in your home while you are in isolation there.
5. Do not share a bedroom or bathroom with anyone else.
6. Do not share towels or bed sheets/blankets with other people.
7. Wash your laundry separately from the laundry of other people.
8. Do not share eating or drinking utensils with other people. Wash utensils normally in a dishwasher or by hand with warm water and soap.
9. Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing and throw tissues away in a lined waste container. Then wash your hands.
10. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

Anyone you have to come in contact with in your household should:

1. Remain aware of their health and watch themselves for:
    a. A fever (temperature over 100.3 degrees). They should take their temperature in the morning and at night.
    b. Other symptoms such as a cough, difficulty breathing, shortness of breath, chills, stiff or sore muscles, headache, or diarrhea.
2. Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available they should use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
3. Wear a mask, such as a surgical mask, if available, when they are in close contact with you if you cannot wear a mask. If not available try to maintain a distance of six feet from others; when this is not possible, limit your time being closer to people to five minutes or less. They should be careful to only touch the parts of the mask that go around the ears or behind the head. Do not touch the front of the mask. They should wash their hands immediately with soap and water after taking the mask off.
4. Wear disposable gloves if they need to have direct contact with your body fluids (saliva/spit, mucous, urine, feces, vomit) or handle your dirty laundry. Remove the gloves carefully without touching the outside of the gloves, throw the gloves away, and wash their hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub.

If anyone in your household develops any of these symptoms, contact the local health department or the Massachusetts Department of Public Health at the phone numbers below.

If they need to seek medical care, they should call their healthcare provider before they go and tell them they may have been exposed to COVID-19.

Other advice to keep your germs from spreading:

1. Your gloves, tissues, masks, and other trash should be put in a bag, tied closed, and put with other household trash.
2. Your laundry may be done in a standard washing machine using warm water and detergent. Bleach may be used but is not needed. Do not shake out the dirty laundry and avoid having the dirty laundry touch anyone's skin or clothing.
3. Surfaces in the home that you touch or that become dirty with your body fluids (saliva/spit, mucous, urine, feces, vomit) should be cleaned and disinfected with a household disinfectant according to the directions on the label. Wear gloves when cleaning.
4. Your bathroom should be cleaned every day using a household disinfectant according to the directions on the label. Wear gloves when cleaning.

How long should you follow these instructions?

You will need to remain isolated for as long as it is possible for you to spread the infection to others. A public health authority (MDPH or your local board of health) will be in contact with you daily and will tell you when you can stop isolating yourself. They will regularly re-assess you and will determine if you need to stay isolated or if the risk of infection to others is low enough that you can stop staying in isolation.

Questions?

Please call your healthcare provider, your local board of health or the Massachusetts Department of Public Health with any questions.

1. Your healthcare provider
   Name: _____
   Phone number: _____ OR
2. Your local board of health (Town/City)
   Town or City: _____
   Contact Person: _____
   Phone number: _____ OR
3. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health
   On-call Epidemiologist
   Phone: (617) 983-6800 (7 days per week/24 hours per day)

Thank you for your active cooperation in keeping yourself, your family, and your community healthy and safe.

Date provided to patient:_____
Provided by (name):_____

Any other specific instructions may be written in here or attached with additional sheets (the attachment of additional sheets should be noted here):