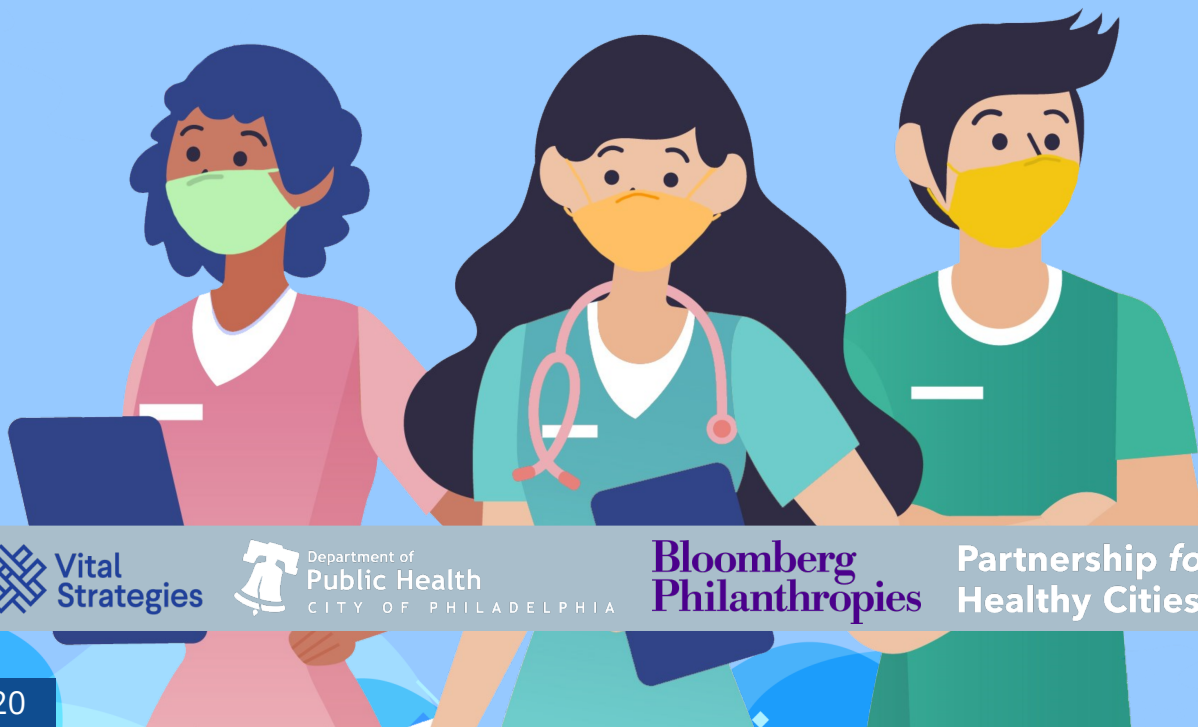


COVID-19 Home Health Handbook: Staying Safe Any Time, Any Place



Department of
Public Health
CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

**Bloomberg
Philanthropies**

**Partnership for
Healthy Cities**

December 2020

As a home health worker, you take care of some of our city's most vulnerable residents. Older adults and people with chronic health conditions are more likely to get severely ill from COVID-19. Protecting yourself means protecting them and preventing further community spread within Philadelphia.

This booklet will help guide you through working during the COVID-19 pandemic using the latest guidance from the Philadelphia Department of Public Health. For more resources, visit www.phila.gov/covid.

Included in this booklet:

- Screening and testing: Page 1-2
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- Isolation and quarantine guidance: Page 6
- The how-tos of hand hygiene: Page 7
- Personal protective equipment use and conservation strategies: Page 8-9
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Screening and Testing

Monitor yourself for symptoms every day and especially before a shift.

Symptoms may appear 2 – 14 days after exposure to the virus. Because you are frequently in close contact with your patients, you should consistently look out for:

- ⇒ Fever or chills
- ⇒ Cough
- ⇒ Shortness of breath
- ⇒ Fatigue
- ⇒ Muscle aches
- ⇒ Headache
- ⇒ New loss of taste or smell
- ⇒ Sore throat
- ⇒ Congestion/runny nose
- ⇒ Nausea/vomiting

Do not go to work or care for others if you have COVID-19 symptoms.

- Information about paid sick leave is provided on page 10 of this booklet. Reference this so you can stay safe without losing earnings.



Screening and Testing

Getting Tested for COVID-19:

It is important for home health workers to get tested because you have frequent and close contact with vulnerable individuals. If you know you are infected, you can take the proper steps to isolate, get healthy, and avoid infecting your patients.

The Philadelphia Department of Public Health recommends getting tested if:

- You are asymptomatic and you have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 or if you were in or near a large crowd for an extended period of time. Wait 5-7 days after your exposure to get a test.
- You have new onset symptoms of COVID-19, as described on the previous page.

Where can I get tested in Philadelphia?

There are many public testing sites throughout the city, and many local health centers are also offering testing. No testing site will ask you for money. You will be asked for identification and health insurance information, but these are not required. **You can find testing options by calling 1-800-722-7112 or by visiting www.phila.gov/testing.**

Client Interactions

Before Your Home Visit:

Before conducting a home visit, be sure to ask patients and clients the following questions:

- **Have you or a member of your household traveled in the last 14 days?**
 - ⇒ Visit the PDPH COVID-19 website for updated travel guidance: www.phila.gov/covid
- **Do you have any of the following symptoms: fever, cough, shortness of breath, new loss of taste or smell, diarrhea, etc.?**
- **Have you had contact with someone with a confirmed/suspected COVID-19 infection, or with someone who is ill with respiratory illness?**
 - ⇒ Close contacts are people who have been within six feet of a person who tested positive for COVID-19 for more than 15 minutes in 24 hours. If they have been in contact with a COVID-19 case, they should plan to quarantine at home for 14 days following their date of exposure.

If the client answers YES to any of these questions, consider proceeding with a virtual or telephone visit if able depending on the client's needs. If the client answers NO to all of these questions, it may be safe to proceed with the home visit.

Client Interactions

During Your Home Visit:

Upon arriving at your client's home, practice hand hygiene before patient contact and implement appropriate infection control protocols (surgical mask, face shield, and gloves).

Continue to take precautions when caring for a client in their home.

- Maintain a distance of at least six feet when possible.
- Minimize contact with frequently-touched surfaces.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before performing patient care and prior to exiting the space.
- Use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not readily available.

If you develop symptoms of illness while conducting a visit, conclude the visit, notify your supervisor and self-isolate at home. Consider getting a COVID-19 test.



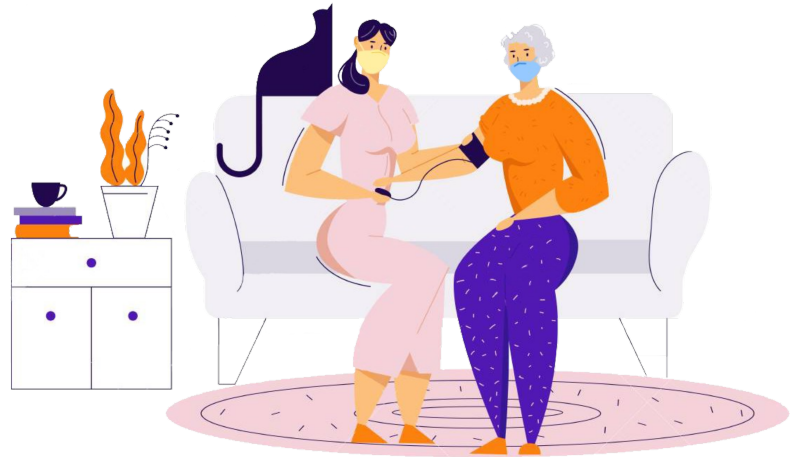
Client Interactions

After Your Home Visit:

After leaving the client's home, make sure to properly dispose of any PPE or supplies that cannot be reused.

If you begin to feel sick and develop respiratory symptoms, make sure to stay home and inform your supervisor.

- Seek COVID-19 testing if symptoms persist.
- Keep an accurate log of the dates/ times that you conducted home visits in the event that this information is needed for contact tracing purposes.



Isolation and Quarantine Guidance

ISOLATION applies to people who are sick with confirmed or suspected COVID-19. Staff may end their isolation period and return to work when all of the following are true:

- 10 days after symptom onset, AND
- No fever for at least 24 hours without using fever-reducing medications, AND
- Symptoms have improved

QUARANTINE applies to people who have been exposed to COVID-19. Staff without any symptoms may end their quarantine period on:

- Day 10 without testing, OR
- Day 7 after receiving a negative test results (lab-based or rapid) after Day 5.

General Guidelines:

- When in isolation/quarantine, try to stay in your home and away from other people for your entire isolation/quarantine period. Staying in a separate room from others is preferable.
- People who don't have symptoms should not share space with people who are feeling sick.
- Only leave your home for essential activities and emergencies, and wear a mask.

The How-Tos of Hand Hygiene

Always perform hand hygiene:

- **BEFORE** and **AFTER** patient contact
- **BEFORE** and **AFTER** touching surfaces
- **BEFORE** and **AFTER** eating
- **AFTER** donning and doffing PPE
- **AFTER** using the restroom
- **AFTER** entering and **BEFORE** exiting the patient's space

Washing with soap and water is best, but an alcohol-based hand sanitizer can be used when soap and water are not available.

When washing your hands with soap and water

- Wet your hands first with water, apply soap to your hands and rub them together for 15-20 seconds, covering all surfaces of the hands and fingers.
- Use disposable towels to dry and turn off the faucet.

When using alcohol-based hand sanitizers

- Put products on hands and rub hands together
- Cover all surfaces until hands feel dry.
- This should take around 20 seconds.



Personal Protective Equipment

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is one of the most essential resources to protect home health workers.

General Guidelines

- Masks should be worn universally by all staff. When entering a patient's home, caregivers should wear a mask and ensure the patient is wearing one too.
- Prioritize surgical masks for caregivers and other home care workers. Patients may wear cloth masks.
- Higher levels of PPE, like gowns and N95s, should only be worn when interacting with a patient who is suspected or known to be ill with COVID-19. For all other patients, a surgical mask is acceptable.
- Gloves are not necessary when caring for patients unless there will be contact with bodily fluids. Hand washing or sanitizing is appropriate protection against COVID-19.
- Reduce use of masks, face shields and gowns through extended use, re-use, and conservation strategies listed on the next page. These methods should be used when PPE supply is restricted or limited.

PPE Conservation Strategies

Surgical Masks

- Surgical masks can be used for an extended time until visibly soiled.
- Save surgical masks for home care workers and use cloth masks for patients.



Gloves

- During shortages gloves can be sanitized between patients.
- CDC does not recommend double gloves



Face Shields/Goggles

- Shift from disposable to reusable devices and clean after use.
- Prioritize for activities where splashes and sprays may be involved.



N95s

- Prioritize N95s for COVID-19 positive patients or respiratory procedures.
- Distribute one N95 per person. Can be reused up to 5 times if the N95 is in good condition.
- Store the N95 in a paper bag with your name on it.
- Wear a surgical mask over your N95 to keep it clean.



Paid Sick Leave

Taking time off when you are sick or have been exposed to COVID-19 is important to stopping the spread of the virus. Paid sick leave laws help make this possible.

Philadelphia Paid Sick Leave Law

Most employers in Philadelphia are required to provide paid sick time when a worker needs time off for the worker's own health OR needs to care for a family member.

Federal Sick Leave Law (FFCRA)

Home health care agencies may not be required to provide paid leave under this law, but if they choose to do so, they can be reimbursed for the costs by the federal government. Under this law, paid sick leave can be used when a worker:

- Needs to stay home due to COVID-19 infection or exposure
- Has been told by a health care provider to quarantine because of COVID-19
- Has COVID-19 symptoms and is seeking a diagnosis
- Is caring for someone who needs to stay home due to COVID-19 infection or exposure

Homecare workers who are employed by agencies should be eligible for paid sick leave. If you have questions about your coverage or if you are denied leave under the Philadelphia Law, call 215-686-0802 or email paysickleave@phila.gov.

References

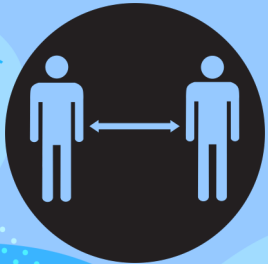
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Wear a mask
Usas una máscara



Wash your hands
Lavas las manos



Watch your distance
Mantienes tu distancia