

Discharge Instructions for Viral Illness and Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Your symptoms are being caused by a virus. One of the potential viruses you may have is the one that causes the novel Coronavirus known as COVID-19. It is a viral illness that can cause fever, cough and trouble breathing. Some people may have chills, muscle aches, runny nose, sneezing, sore throat, upset stomach or loose stool.

- Most patients with COVID-19 have mild symptoms and get better on their own.
- Your virus could also just be the common cold or flu.

When do I need to call the doctor?

- You are well enough to go home and treat your symptoms by resting, drinking fluids, and taking medicines for fevers, cough, pain, etc. (follow all usage and warning information on the label when using non-prescription medicines).
- Monitor your symptoms carefully.
- Call your doctor if your breathing is getting worse (harder or faster than before or you feel like you are getting less air), chest pain, are unable to eat or drink enough, or severe vomiting, diarrhea or weakness or are getting sicker.
- Some people start to feel worse in the second week of their illness, if you start to feel worse at any time in your illness, please call your doctor, who will tell you where to go to be seen.
- If you can, put on a facemask before leaving home or before you enter the clinic or hospital.

Get medical attention right away if you develop emergency warning signs of COVID-19 such as: trouble breathing, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, new confusion or not able to wake up, bluish lips or face.

How will I get my test results?

- Test results are sent to your MyChart account. If you do not have a MyChart we encourage you sign up for one, if able.
 - To sign up for MyChart:
<https://mychart.healthsystem.virginia.edu/MyChart/signup>
- The clinic will call if your test result is positive. You can call the clinic if you do not get your result back within 24-48 hours.

Precautions at home

Follow these precautions while you wait for your test results or if you have symptoms but were not tested.

The virus is spread easily through tiny droplets when you cough or sneeze. You should take these steps to help prevent the disease from spreading to people in your home and community.

1. Self-isolate at home

As advised by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), we ask you to stay in your home and limit contact with others to avoid spreading this virus.

Stay home except to go to the doctor

- Do not go to work, school, or public areas, except for getting medical care.
- Avoid using public transportation (such as buses), ride-sharing, or taxis.
- If you have an upcoming doctor appointment, call the office and tell them that you have COVID-19.

Separate yourself from other people and animals in your home.

- Avoid touching other people, including handshaking
- As much as you can, stay in a specific room and away from other people in your home.
 - You should also use a separate bathroom, if available.
- Avoid sharing personal household items.
 - You should not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, toothpaste, or bedding with other people or pets in your home.
 - After using these items, they should be washed well with soap and water.
- Do not handle pets or other animals while sick.

2. Clean and disinfect

Clean all “high-touch” surfaces every day.

- High-touch surfaces include counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables.
- 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 air flow in the room during use of the product.

Wash laundry.

- Remove and wash clothes or bedding that have blood, stool, or body fluids on them and then wash your hands right away.

3. Help stop the spread

Clean your hands often.

- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry.

OR

- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Wash your hands after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing; going to the bathroom, and before eating or preparing food.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

Cover your coughs and sneezes.

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- Throw used tissues in a lined trash can; clean your hands right away.

Wear a facemask

- You should wear a facemask when you are around other people (e.g., sharing a room or vehicle) or pets and before you enter a healthcare provider's office.

4. Notify your close contacts

Notify people you have been in contact with. They may need to stay home or be tested.

When can I stop precautions at home?**Positive test results**

If your result is positive, or if you were not tested:

- **Isolate yourself for at least 5 days**, or longer if directed by your doctor. Do not go out of your place of residence. Do not go to work.
- **After 5 days** (day 0 is the first day of symptoms or the date of the day of the positive test if you do not have symptoms), if you have no symptoms or your symptoms are improving you can return to your normal activities, but should continue to **wear a mask when around others for an additional 5 days**.
- If you are unable to wear a mask when around others, you should isolate for a full 10 days. Stay home longer if directed by your doctor.
- You may still need to be in isolation for at least 10 days in a healthcare setting, talk to your doctor for more information.
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- **If you have either been hospitalized with severe COVID-19 disease or you are immunocompromised (have a decreased ability to fight infection)**, you may spread the virus for a longer period of time after recovery. Please continue **self-isolation for twenty (20) days** in such an event. Most people do not require retesting to decide when they can be around others

Negative test results

If your result is negative, you should continue to practice all the protective measures recommended to keep yourself and others free from illness.

- You probably were not infected at the time your specimen was collected.
- A negative test result does not mean you won't get sick later.
- It is possible that you were very early in your infection at the time of your specimen collection and that you could test positive later, or you could be exposed later and then become sick.
- Contact your doctor if you start to feel worse.

Manage your stress and anxiety

- Being ill can be stressful or cause anxiety. Remember that everyone reacts differently to stressful situations.
- Being ill with COVID-19 might be especially stressful because it is a new disease and there is a lot of news coverage. Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including social media.
- People with preexisting mental conditions should continue their treatment and be aware of new or worsening symptoms.
- If you, or someone you care about, are feeling overwhelmed with emotions like sadness, depression, or anxiety, call the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA's) Disaster Distress Helpline: 1.800.985.5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746. (TTY 1.800.846.8517)

For more information:

- CDC Coronavirus Website <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- CDC Coronavirus Frequently Asked Questions <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html>
- Virginia Department of Health (VDH) Info <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus/>
- Call VDH COVID-19 hotline at 877-ASK-VDH3