



COVID-19 Infection Prevention Guidance for Transitional Housing Facilities

June 25, 2020

How COVID-19 Spreads

- Mainly spreads from person to person when droplets are produced due to coughing, sneezing, and even talking.
- It can also spread if someone touches a surface that has the virus on it and then touches their mouth, nose, or eyes.

Common Symptoms of COVID-19

- Fever or chills
- Coughing
- Shortness of breath
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Stuffy or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

Isolation and Quarantine

- Isolation means separating sick residents from residents who are not sick.
- Quarantine means separating those possibly exposed to COVID-19 from other residents for 14 days. This is needed to stop the spread of the disease, because after exposure it may take several days to become ill. Those who become sick may spread the virus days before they have symptoms.

Tips for Staying Safe and Healthy

1. Stay Apart

- Encourage [social distancing](#) among residents, staff, and visitors. Social distancing is maintaining a distance of at least 6 feet from other people. Group activities where social distancing cannot be maintained should be cancelled.
- Develop a schedule to limit the number of residents leaving their rooms at certain times. For example, stagger mealtimes to avoid large groups of residents in the dining areas.
- Make sure dorms and common spaces have adequate air flow and/or open windows to provide ventilation.
- Limit visitors to those who are absolutely necessary.

2. Quarantine New Residents

- Quarantine new residents for 14 days to ensure the new resident is not sick with the virus. This can help reduce the spread of COVID-19 to other residents, especially since the virus can be spread before people develop symptoms.
- Food and drinks should be provided in the new resident's room. Disinfect surfaces that have touched leftover food, utensils, plates, bowls, cups, laundry, trash, and other personal items.
- [Wear gloves](#) when handling the new resident's food, utensils, plates, bowls, cups, laundry, trash, and other personal items and [wash your hands](#) immediately after removing gloves.

3. Increase Cleaning and Disinfection

- Clean and disinfect rooms frequently to prevent the possible spread of the virus to other areas.
- Cleaning can be done with soap and water or a detergent solution. It is the first step to reducing the number of germs on a surface and removing dirt and other impurities.
- Disinfection is the process of applying an [EPA-registered disinfectant](#) to a surface to kill the remaining germs, after cleaning. Disinfectants should be applied to frequently touched surfaces, such as doorknobs, keyboards and light switches, regularly throughout the day.
- Always follow manufacturer directions when using cleaning products and disinfectants. Turn on an exhaust fan or open a window to air out the room while cleaning and disinfecting.

4. Wash Your Hands Often

- [Wash your hands](#) with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before eating or touching your face and after visiting common areas, blowing your nose, coughing, sneezing, and [removing your face coverings](#).
- Use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol when soap and water are not available. Make sure your hands are covered with hand sanitizer and rub them together until they are dry. Non-alcohol-based hand sanitizer is not effective against coronavirus.

5. Cloth Face Coverings

- Wear a [cloth face covering](#) in shared spaces. Cloth face coverings reduce the chance that someone will infect other people if they are sick. Someone with COVID-19 can infect other people even if they feel healthy and do not know they are sick, so everyone needs to wear a cloth face covering in common areas. Many recent studies showed that if everyone wears cloth face coverings, there are less new cases, and less deaths.
- Cloth face coverings can be [made at home with household items](#). Each person should be provided with at least two cloth face coverings, so one can be worn while the other is being washed.
- Wash cloth face coverings according to [CDC instructions](#).

6. Be Cautious in Shared Areas

- Kitchens and Dining Areas:
 - Reduce the number of people allowed in the kitchen and dining areas at a time. Consider providing meals in residents' rooms instead of in dining areas.
 - Ensure social distancing of residents at least 6 feet apart.
 - Do not share dishes, cups, or eating utensils.
 - Plate food individually. Do not serve food family or buffet style.
 - Remember to [wear gloves](#) when handling, cleaning, and disposing of trash and dishes, cups, and eating utensils.
 - Wash dishes, cups, and eating utensils with soap and hot water after use.
 - [Wash your hands](#) after handling, cleaning, and disposing of trash and dishes, cups, and eating utensils, even if you wore gloves.
 - Clean and disinfect the kitchen and dining areas with [EPA-registered disinfectants](#) on a regular basis.
- Laundry Rooms:
 - Make sure the laundry room is stocked with supplies (laundry detergent, bleach, etc.).
 - Remember to [wear gloves](#) when handling dirty clothes and linens.
 - Do not shake laundry when placing it into the washing machine or dryer.
 - [Wash hands](#) after handling soiled laundry.
 - Clean and disinfect laundry room items (laundry machines, laundry baskets, laundry carts, countertops, etc.) with [EPA-registered disinfectants](#) between uses.
- Bathrooms:
 - Make sure bathrooms are supplied with soap and paper towels.
 - Clean and disinfect bathrooms frequently with [EPA-registered disinfectants](#).
 - Empty trash cans frequently.
 - Remember to [wear gloves](#) when handling and disposing of trash and when cleaning and disinfecting the bathroom.
 - [Wash your hands](#) after each time you handle or dispose of trash, even if you wore gloves.

If a Resident Gets Sick

- If a resident is sick with COVID-19 symptoms, arrange for COVID-19 testing and schedule a visit with a medical provider if necessary. Have the resident self-isolate until the test results come back.
- Contact your [local health department](#) if the resident tests positive for COVID-19.
- A resident who tests positive for COVID-19 should self-isolate until at least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since their fever went away without the use of fever-reducing medications and respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath) have improved, AND it has been at least 10 days since their symptoms first started.
- All people who have been in close contact (within 6 feet for 15 minutes or more) with a COVID-19-positive resident should quarantine for 14 days to make sure they do not have COVID-19. This can help reduce the possible spread of the virus to other who are not sick.
- Have a plan for obtaining urgent medical care for suspected or confirmed COVID-19 patients, if necessary. If you need to call 911 or take the resident to a healthcare facility, let them know that the patient has COVID-19 so their provider can take appropriate precautions.
- Continue to clean and disinfect regularly.
- Monitor the wellness of residents regularly.

If a Staff Member Gets Sick

- Have a flexible sick leave policy and educate staff about it. Sick staff should not come to work. If a staff member starts feeling sick at work, they should notify their supervisor and go home right away.
- Encourage any sick staff members to seek COVID-19 testing from their healthcare provider. They should call ahead to let their provider know they are coming in with COVID-19 symptoms so they can take appropriate precautions. They should self-isolate at home until they get their test results.
- If a staff member is diagnosed with COVID-19, contact your [local health department](#).
- A COVID-19-positive staff member should continue to self-isolate at home and remain home from work until at least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since their fever went away without the use of fever-reducing medications and respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath) have improved, AND it has been at least 10 days since their symptoms first started.
- All people who have been in close contact (within 6 feet for 15 minutes or more) with a COVID-19-positive staff member should quarantine for 14 days to make sure they do not have COVID-19. This can help reduce the possible spread of the virus to others who are not sick.
- Post signs reminding staff to maintain physical distancing (at least 6 feet apart) in staff areas such as break rooms.
- Continue to clean and disinfect regularly.
- Monitor the wellness of residents regularly.

NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Stay Informed

- Read the [CDC guidance for congregate housing](#) to learn more about how to protect your staff and residents from COVID-19.
- Check the [NC DHHS website](#) for guidance and updates about COVID-19.

References:

- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/shared-congregate-house/guidance-shared-congregate-housing.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-covid-spreads.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/quarantine/index.html>
- <https://files.nc.gov/covid/documents/guidance/healthcare/NC-Interim-Guidance-for-BHIDD-Group-Homes-3-20-20-Final.pdf>
- <https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/guidance#long-term-care-facilities>
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g7E_fRKMLZE&feature=youtu.be (slides)