

DISCHARGE PREPARATION INSTRUCTIONS

Discharge Information for Families & Household Members of COVID-19 Patients

Plan Ahead for the Day of Discharge

Your family member is currently being treated for COVID-19. With advancements in treatments, many patients who do not require ICU care will be ready to go home in **less than five days!** This is great news for patients and their loved ones. We are providing this information now to help you get ready to bring your family member home.

Transportation: How do I get my family member home safely?

You can take your family member home by car or private vehicle. COVID-19 does not require specialized transport. An ambulance is not necessary unless there is some other medical condition that requires transport by EMS.

- Decide early on who will drive your family member home.
- Remember to wear a mask in the car. Everyone in the vehicle should wear a mask (driver and family member coming home from the hospital).
- Lower windows, if possible, to increase air circulation.
- Place the family member in the backseat, if possible.

Get Supplies

Supplies: What do I need to have at home to care for my family member?

Aside from picking up any prescriptions on the day of discharge, it is good to have a thermometer, basic cleaning supplies, and masks.

- Basic thermometer
- Hand soap and household cleaner
- Masks for your household

What about a pulse oximeter?

A pulse oximeter (often called a “pulse ox”) is a small device that clips onto your finger (or other body part) and measures the level of oxygen in your blood. You can purchase these inexpensive devices at Amazon, Walmart, and most drug stores without prescription. Your healthcare provider MAY recommend that you get a pulse ox to monitor the family member’s oxygen levels. Ask your healthcare provider if a pulse ox is recommended for your family member.

Caring for Someone Sick at Home

Most people who get COVID-19 recover at home without the need for hospitalization. It is important for individuals who are discharged from the hospital with COVID-19 to follow precautions to limit the spread of COVID-19. Remember to protect yourself and the others from infection while the family member is getting better.

Designate a separate room for the patient:

- Decide on a separate space as a “sick room” where your family member can continue to recover when they get home. The family member should stay in the sick room at all times until the isolation

period ends. When your family member gets ready to discharge from the hospital, the provider will tell you how many days that the family member needs to isolate at home.

- If possible, the family member should use a separate bathroom while in isolation. If you do not have a separate bathroom, that is ok! Just remember to keep household cleaner and paper towels in the bathroom so that you can wipe down the surfaces after each use by the family member. Throw away used paper towels or wipes in a lined trash can. Remember to wash your hands thoroughly after any cleaning.

Decide who will be the primary caregiver:

- Decide who is going to care for the family member. The caregiver, when possible, should not be someone who is at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19. In a multi-person household, try to identify one person that can be the primary caregiver. This person will check on the family member, bring meals, etc. The caregiver AND the family member should wear a mask when they are in the same room together.
- The caregiver should quarantine for 14 days after initial close contact with the family member. (Ask your healthcare provider how to calculate the quarantine time).

Tips for protecting yourself and others:

- Wear a mask that covers your nose and mouth when interacting with your family member during the isolation period.
- Make sure that your family member is wearing a mask that covers the nose and mouth when interacting with anyone during the isolation period.
- If possible, maintain 6 feet of distance between your family member and other household members.
- Wash hands frequently for at least 20 seconds. Proper handwashing is the preferred method of protection at home compared to gloves or hand sanitizer.
- Do not share personal items with your family member. Examples: dishes, cups, forks, spoons, knives, towels, bedding, or electronics (like a cell phone).
- Wipe down “high touch” surfaces (door knobs, remotes, light switches, countertops, toilets, faucets, etc.) with household cleaner daily.
- Wash dishes using soap and hot water or in the dishwasher. Wash your hands after handling your family member’s dishes.
- Monitor the health of all persons in the household for signs of COVID-19.
- Avoid having visitors.
- Open windows and doors when the weather permits to allow for good air circulation.
- Wear a mask, avoid crowds, practice social distancing, and follow these CDC recommended tips for running errands. (CDC Tips for running errands - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/essential-goods-services.html>)

Learn More:

While your family member is at UAB, talk to the healthcare team. Ask any questions that you have about the family member’s condition and what to expect when going home. We are here to help!

Review the CDC Guidelines on caring for someone with COVID-19 at home.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/care-for-someone.html>

This information above is provided to patients and families to help them plan for discharge from the hospital when the patient has a confirmed COVID-19 infection. It is not specific to the individual patient, nor is it applicable to every patient or family situation. It not intended to replace or supersede patient discharge instructions/teaching.