

FACING COVID-19 IN YOUR MEDICAL OFFICE



Quick Reference Guide

ENSURING CONTINUITY OF CARE FOR YOUR PATIENTS DURING THE EMERGENCY

As we know, the coronavirus was declared a public health emergency by the World Health Organization (WHO), and categorized as a pandemic on March 11, 2020. Therefore, it's important to take steps to ensure continuity of care for your patients.

You are needed more than ever by your patients. Therefore, you need to establish a continuity of operations to provide health care:

- Establish initiatives aimed at continuing health care.
- Avoid overuse of the emergency room.
- Learn about how you should manage your medical needs during this time.
- Explain the available and accessible care alternatives.

Identify the team – whether the staff is working remotely or in the office – to help you perform some of the functions detailed below:

- Contact all your patients to learn their health status and inform them of your service availability.
- Use digital media, such as social networks, to stay informed about available services and adopted protocols, among others
- Tell your patients how appointments will be coordinated, and how they will be attended to:
 - Electronic means (email, telephone or teleconference consultations, among others)
 - If you require face-to-face service, establish an hourly appointment system and avoid crowding patients into your office.
- Depending on each patient's level of complexity, establish how you will appropriately manage it, and make sure you give the patient time to respond to all your questions.
- Keep a record of all medical services provided, and submit the encounter.

At this time, safety and peace of mind are paramount, and we're confident that by taking these measures for your patients' continuity of care, they will feel as if their health conditions are being addressed adequately.

We appreciate your commitment to continue providing services to our members. Remember, your service representative is available to answer all your questions and provide the service quality you deserve.

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PREPARE YOUR MEDICAL OFFICE



PREPARE YOUR MEDICAL OFFICE TO FACE COVID-19



The new COVID-19 respiratory disease could affect your community. Therefore, we want to support you by providing the safety measures established by Puerto Rico's healthcare authorities and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). That way, you will be able to prepare your medical office and provide care to your patients safely.

Ensure the safety and protection of your patients and staff. Establish and reinforce more rigorous prevention protocols in your medical office, such as the following:

- 1 Routinely evaluate and replenish your supplies and equipment promptly.
- 2 Reinforce office and equipment cleaning protocols.
 - A Increase cleaning frequency.
 - B Ensure that detergents you are using are suitable for disinfecting the area.
- 3 Restrict access for visitors, non-essential staff and suppliers.
- 4 Limit the number of patients in your office, according to available space and established social distancing norms.
- 5 Identify which of your patients may have higher risk levels and complications when infected with COVID-19.
- 6 Increase and reinforce precautionary measures when you become aware that the virus is spreading in your community.

Prepare and train your team as soon as possible

- 1 Establish a work plan to follow for the continuity of your operations, whether the work is done remotely or in the office.
- 2 Make sure the clinical staff knows the right way to place, use and remove personal protective equipment.
- 3 Provide guidance to your staff on how to recognize COVID-19 symptoms: fever, cough and difficulty breathing.
- 4 Implement procedures to quickly separate sick patients from those coming for follow-up appointments.
- 5 Stress hand washing and the correct way to cough.
- 6 Ask your staff members to stay home if they are sick.
- 7 Send staff members home if they develop symptoms while at the workplace.

Before receiving patients

1 Communicate with your patients:

- A Continuity and access to treatment is fundamental. Notify your patients if you have made any adjustments to your hours, or have new instructions, if necessary, for access to prescriptions or visits. It is also important to notify them about the new emergency protocols you will carry out to provide medical care, either through an in-office or virtual visit.
- B Prior to the appointment, ask the patient if he or she has had any symptoms related to COVID-19.
- C Consider rescheduling non-urgent follow-up appointments or using electronic means for these services.
- D Place preventive action signs at the entrances and in the waiting rooms.

2 Prepare the waiting area and patient rooms.

- A Provide supplies: tissues, hand sanitizer, soap at the sinks, and trash containers with lids.
- B Arrange the chairs according to social distancing recommendations.
- C If your office has toys, reading material or other commonly used objects, eliminate them to prevent them from becoming a source of infection.

When receiving patients

3 Place staff members at the entrance of your office to ask, compassionately and discreetly, if the patient has any symptoms.

- A Give masks to those patients with COVID-19 symptoms, so they can cover their mouth and nose.
- B Limit companion visits.
- C Allow patients to wait outside the office or in their vehicles, if they can medically do so.
- D Place sick patients in a private room as soon as possible.

After evaluating a patient

- A Once the patient leaves, you must clean all surfaces, such as countertops, beds and chairs with disinfectants approved by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).
- B Provide home care instructions to patients with respiratory symptoms. Consider Telehealth options for follow-up.
- C Notify the Department of Health if you have patients with COVID-19 symptoms.

Stay informed through reliable sources

This will help you reinforce your safety measures and other aspects that impact your practice. These include:

- A The Department of Health
- B Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)
- C Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

References:

Adapted from Prepare Your Practice for COVID-19. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/healthcare-facilities/practice-preparedness.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/Clinic.pdf>

Other references:

American Medical Association

- Tips for maintaining your business practice during the COVID-19 pandemic
<https://www.ama-assn.org/delivering-care/public-health/tips-keeping-your-practice-business-during-covid-19-pandemic>
- COVID-19: Frequently Asked Questions
<https://www.ama-assn.org/delivering-care/public-health/covid-19-frequently-asked-questions>
- Fast Guide to Telemedicine in a Practice
<https://www.ama-assn.org/practice-management/digital/ama-quick-guide-telemedicine-practice>

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services

- Information and updates for this health emergency
<https://www.cms.gov/About-CMS/Agency-Information/Emergency/EPRO/Current-Emergencies/Current-Emergencies-page>

Puerto Rico Department of Health

- COVID-19 Section
<http://www.salud.gov.pr/Pages/coronavirus.aspx>

PROTOCOLS OF SERVICE



MANAGING PATIENTS IN YOUR MEDICAL OFFICE



During this emergency period, it is best to activate a protocol for the remote assessment and management of your patients. However, if it is necessary to receive patients in your office, we recommend you consider implementing these 8 practices as part of your emergency protocol, in order to continue your operations and care for your patients:

- 1 Ensure all staff members have the necessary protective equipment.**
 - Emphasize the correct use of the equipment, hand hygiene and the correct way to cough.
- 2 Prepare the waiting area and office rooms with the necessary supplies.**
 - Tissues, hand sanitizer, gloves, antibacterial soap, among others.
- 3 Contact and inform your patients about the services you will provide in the office (emergencies) or remotely (patient assessments and management).**
 - Include information on the office's website and/or social networks regarding the new office policies for appointments, phone/telemedicine assessments and visitors.
 - If the office is closed, update the recorded message to notify and provide alternatives on how to contact the doctor in case of an emergency.
- 4 Limit the number of patients in the medical office.**
 - Establish an hourly appointment system to avoid crowding patients into the office.
 - Inform administrative and clinical staff members regarding the process to follow to coordinate the appointments.
- 5 Evaluate the service required by the patient.**
 - Conduct a patient screening during the call and, according to the complexity of the patient, determine whether the appointment could be handled remotely or attended to at the office. Include symptoms related to COVID-19 in the screening.
 - Notify the patient on the steps to follow if suspected COVID-19 or any other detected complication.
 - Indicate the time of the appointment and keep an updated appointment record for corresponding follow-ups.
 - The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) promote the use of a variety of remote methods (teleconsultations and telemedicine, among others) to decrease the volume of people at offices for emergencies.

6 If receiving patients without previous appointments, establish a system to receive the patients at the office entrance or in their vehicles to avoid lines or contact with other patients.

- Maintain personnel who can quickly identify the reason for the visit and take information to minimize waiting time.
- Remember to take the recommended social distancing measures (6 feet).
- Complete those services that can be done quickly, such as document delivery, prescriptions and others.
- If ensuring social distancing is not possible, we recommend noting the patient's name and phone number, on a first-come-first-served basis, and asking patients to wait in their cars if medically able.
- Call the patient at the number provided to notify the individual that it is his or her turn to receive care.

7 Emphasize the safety protocol to the patients when they arrive at the medical office.

- Wearing gloves and masks, using hand sanitizer, and coughing correctly.
- Place signs around the office to reinforce the safety protocols.

8 Reinforce office and equipment cleaning protocols.

- Increase cleaning frequencies as recommended by the CDC.
- Routinely disinfect the waiting room throughout the entire day, and discard magazines or other objects patients use in the waiting room.

Remember, with MCS Provet, you can refer to all Official Communications related to COVID-19 in the Communications Section, Circular Letter subsection, key word: COVID. You can also go to your COVID Resource Center at mcs.com.pr.

References:

- American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP)
Checklist to Prepare Physician Offices for COVID-19
https://www.aafp.org/dam/AAFP/documents/patient_care/public_health/COVID-19%20Office%20Prep%20Checklist.pdf
- American Medical Association (AMA)
Tips for Maintaining Your Business Practice during the COVID-19 Pandemic
<https://www.ama-assn.org/delivering-care/public-health/tips-keeping-your-practice-business-during-covid-19-pandemic>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
Prepare Your Practice for COVID-19
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/preparedness-resources.html>
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/hcp-personnel-checklist.html>
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html>
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-hcf.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fhealthcare-facilities%2Fguidance-hcf.html

MANAGING PATIENTS REMOTELY

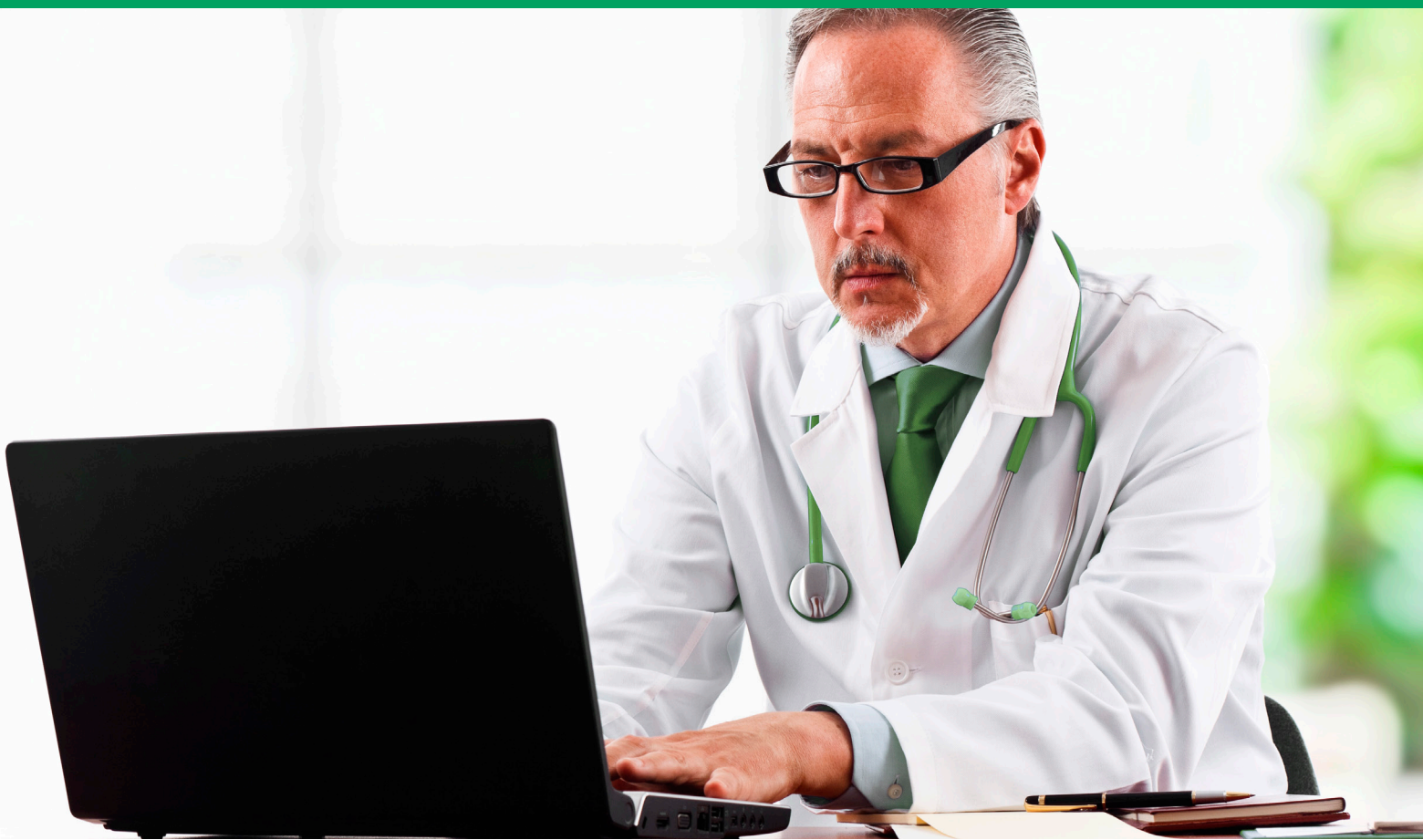


Adapting your practice to manage your patients remotely during the emergency period is easier than you might think, and ensures you continue to provide healthcare services to your community.

Here are 10 useful steps you can adapt to your practice as part of the emergency protocol.

- 1 Implement a work plan and discuss it with your staff.**
 - Establish your employees' roles, according to the tasks they will perform in the office or remotely. Refer to the diagram we have included to help you establish the roles.
- 2 Notify your patients regarding the availability of your services.**
 - Use digital media, such as social networks or text messages. You can also activate a voice message with the established protocol, among others.
- 3 Use available means to provide remote assessment services and monitoring.**
 - Teleconsultations, email, teleconferences, audio, video calls, images and telemedicine, among others.
- 4 Prepare your staff to receive patient consultations by the available electronic means.**
 - In the case of high volume, accept the consultation and provide notice of the time when it will be held or provide priority attention, if required by the patient.
- 5 Establish the proper steps to follow, depending on the complexity of each patient:**
 - Chronic conditions and treatment
 - Hospital Discharges: You can conduct the Drug Reconciliation after the discharge (MRP) by phone and submit Code I I I I F. This could prevent hospital readmission at a time when these facilities are compromised as a result of the COVID-19 emergency.
 - You can submit prescriptions to the pharmacy by any electronic means: orally, e-prescribing, doctor-pharmacy call, photo by text message, email or WhatsApp.
- 6 Conduct patient screenings**
 - Notify them of the steps to follow in case of suspected COVID-19 or any other detected complication.





Answer all patient questions and/or doubts.

7 **In the medical record, document all services provided.**

8 **Ensure that your billing staff is aware of the payment rules and fees for teleconsultation and telemedicine services, as they apply to this emergency period.**

Refer to the Official Communications issued by MCS on COVID-19 billing and coding.

■ **Virtual Consultation Billing.**

10 Consider the coding and billing rules for these services.

- Remember, you can use TeleHealth (audio and video simultaneously) to complete your patient's Comprehensive Health Risk Assessment (CHRA).

Submit the encounters, if your contract so provides.

■

Remember, with MCS Proinet, you can refer to all Official Communications related to COVID-19 in the Communications Section, Circular Letters subsection, key word: COVID. You can also go to your COVID Resource Center at mcs.com.pr.

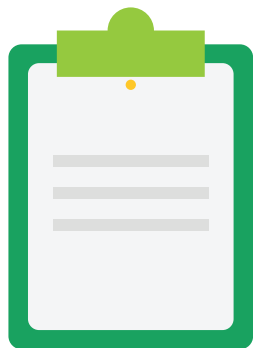
Reference:

Quick Guide to Telemedicine in the Practice

- <https://www.ama-assn.org/practice-management/digital/ama-quick-guide-telemedicine-practice>

VIRTUAL MEDICINE ROLES

ESSENTIAL TEAM



Virtual Medicine

Covers all means by which a healthcare provider can interact remotely with patients. For example, phone consultations, email, teleconferences, audio-video calls and images, among others.

Administrative Staff

Organizes member appointments. Manages the entire appointment administration process and checks the doctor's schedule. Bills for the services that were provided to each patient.

Clinical/Nursing Staff

Serves the needs of their patients through registration and monitoring. Make an assessment before the medical consultation. Supports the continuity of patient care and monitoring.

General physician

Provides remote assessments and monitoring to patients in the context of a general consultation. Must document all consultations in the medical records.

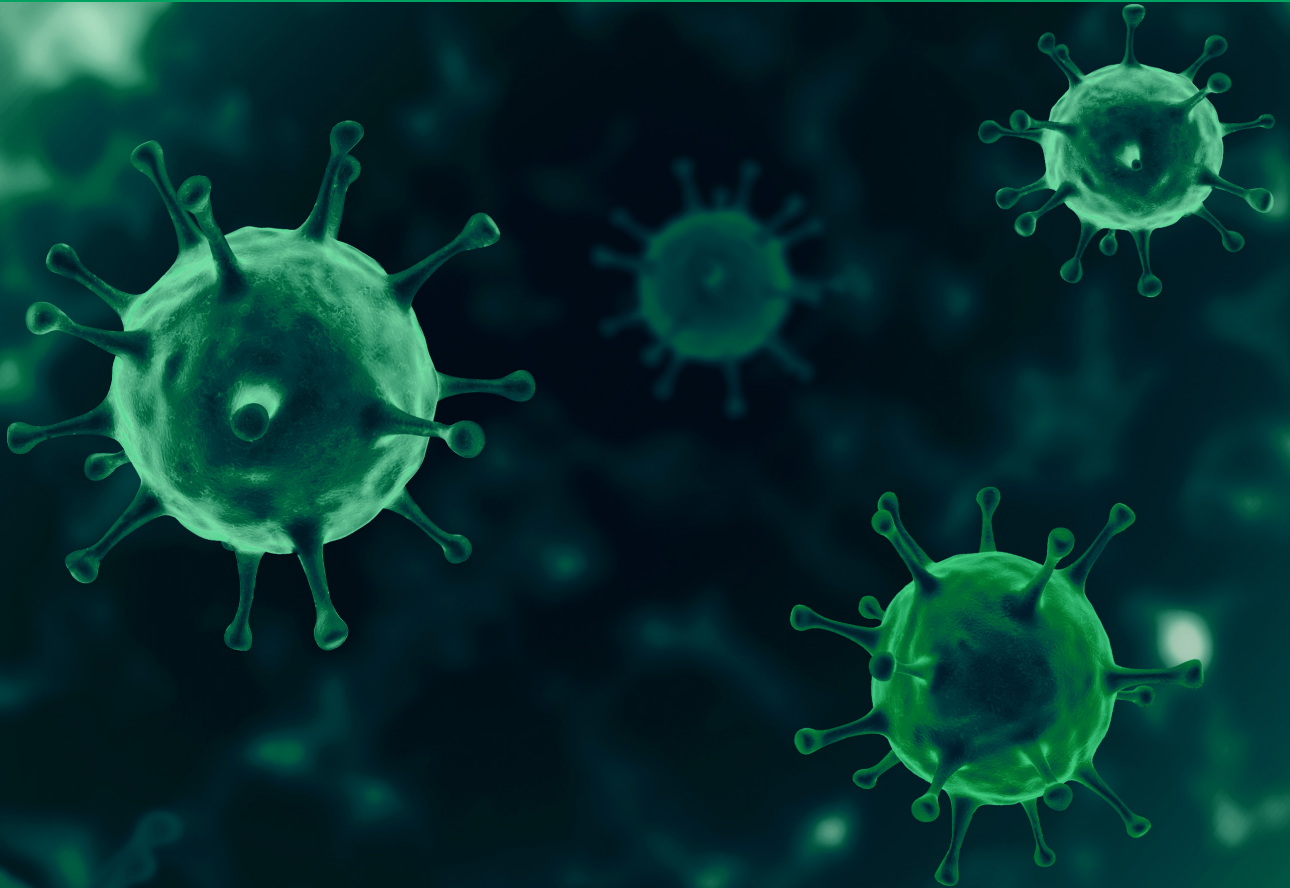
Patient

The patient is able to be cared for by the medical staff, and is responsible for reviewing his or her appointments. May also receive reminders of health-related events, and must follow the doctor's instructions.

BILLING OF SERVICES



ICD-10-CM: COVID-19 CODING



In response to the public emergency declaration as a result of COVID-19, the World Health Organization (WHO) created a new ICD-10-CM code for the coronavirus on January 31, 2020. This code is **U07.1 (2019-nCoV Acute Respiratory Disease)** and is effective as of April 1, 2020. This code is included in Chapter 22 on Codes for Special Purposes.

WHO has indicated in the ICD-10 classification that **U00-U49** are reserved for the provisional assignment of uncertain etiological conditions.

Understanding the instructions for using Code **U07.1**:

1. Used for confirmed COVID-19 cases.
2. Asymptomatic patients whose COVID-19 test was positive.
3. Use an additional code to identify pneumonia or other manifestations:
 - Other viral pneumonia (**J12.89**)
 - Acute bronchitis due to other specific organisms (**J20.8**)
 - Unspecified acute lower respiratory infection (**J22**)
 - Bronchitis, not specified as acute or chronic (**J40**)
 - Other specified respiratory disorders (**J98.8**)
 - Acute respiratory distress syndrome (**J80**)

Using other coding guidelines:

1. As of April 1, 2020, you must not assign **B97.29, Other coronavirus as the cause of diseases classified elsewhere**.
2. It is not appropriate to use Code **B34.2, Coronavirus infection not specified by COVID-19**, given that in reported cases, the conditions have been respiratory, so the **unspecified** term is not correct.
3. Code **J12.81, Severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), not specified**, must not be used.
4. Assign Code **Z11.59, Encounter for screening other viral diseases** for asymptomatic people being examined for COVID-19, with no known exposure to the virus, and the test results are unknown or negative.
5. To document COVID-19 in pregnancy, childbirth and puerperium for an incoming patient (or one who comes for a medical care encounter), assign a primary diagnosis of **O98.5- Other viral diseases complicating pregnancy, childbirth and the puerperium**, followed by Code **U07.1** and the appropriate codes for associated manifestations.
6. For cases where there is a concern about exposure to a person confirmed with COVID-19, but it is ruled out after an evaluation, assign diagnostic Code **Z03.818, Encounter for observation for suspected exposure to other biological agents ruled out**.
7. For cases where there is a concern about exposure to a person confirmed with COVID-19, the contact must be coded with the following code: **Z20.828, Contact with and (suspected) exposure to other viral communicable diseases**.

For signs, symptoms and no definitive diagnosis:

- Cough (R05)
- Shortness of breath (R06.02)
- Fever, unspecified (R50.9)



Symptoms

- Fever
- Dry cough
- Difficulty breathing

Because there is not yet a specific antiviral treatment for COVID-19, medical care is focused on relieving symptoms and providing care and support.

Provider Education Unit

EducationNetworkMgm@medicalcardsystem.com

References:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
 - o Announcement New ICD-10-CM Code 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)
<https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/icd/icd10cm.htm>
<https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/icd/Announcement-New-ICD-code-for-coronavirus-3-18-2020.pdf>
 - o ICD-10-CM Official Coding and Reporting Guidelines
<https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/icd/icd10cm.htm>
<https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/icd/ICD-10-CM-Official-Coding-Guidance-Interim-Advice-coronavirus-feb-20-2020.pdf>
- ICD-10 monitor
<https://www.icd10monitor.com/covid-19-has-new-code-in-april>

EDUCATION TO YOUR PATIENT



TIPS FOR CAREGIVERS OF THE ELDERLY



According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), people over the age of 60 are one of the most vulnerable groups for COVID-19 infection. That is why we must focus our efforts on prevention.

If you are caring for an older adult, here are some recommendations to protect your loved one:

- If you have any concerns regarding COVID-19, ask his or her primary physician.
- Also ask if virtual medical visits are an option for your loved one to receive health care for the duration of the emergency. That's how you avoid contact with sick people.
- Also, be informed through trusted media sources, such as the Puerto Rico Department of Health, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the CDC and the health plan of the older adult, among others.
- Consider receiving only those home visits that are necessary. Use virtual tools to stay in touch with family members, friends and neighbors.
- Practice good hygiene, such as frequent hand washing with soap and water, or the use of a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. This applies to you and your loved one.
- Clean household surfaces regularly.
- Make arrangements with a family member to care for the loved one in case you are unavailable to do so.
- As a caregiver, you must also take care of your own health. Avoid unnecessary trips outside the home, and places with high concentrations of customers. Use drive-thru or home delivery services, and have the merchandise left at your door or entrance.
- If you need to go out, keep a distance of six feet from others.

WASHING YOUR HANDS

Handwashing reduces the risk of spreading respiratory diseases such as Covid-19, the flu and mycoplasma.

Five simple and effective steps for washing your hands:



Wet your hands with clean running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and soap your hands.



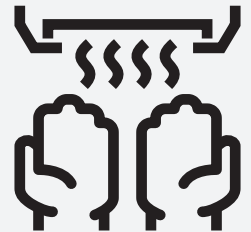
Rub your hands with the soap until lathery. Be sure to rub the lather on the back of your hands, between your fingers, and under your fingernails.



Lather your hands for at least 20 seconds.



Rinse your hands thoroughly with clean running water.



Dry your hands with a towel or in the air.

At MCS, our priority is to give you peace of mind and keep you informed. We're committed to educating and protecting citizens with the appropriate response.

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1.866.727.6271

Orientation services and phone consulting, with healthcare professionals addressing concerns regarding the correct management of medical conditions and symptoms.

Reference: <https://www.paho.org>

15 ACTIONS WHEN CARING FOR SOMEONE WHO HAS CONTRACTED COVID-19



If you are in charge of caring for an infected patient, we recommend the following measures to protect your health and contribute to the person's recovery:

- 1 Make sure you understand the healthcare provider's instructions regarding medications and patient care, and help the person follow them.
- 2 Monitor the patient's symptoms. If the illness gets worse and you need to leave home, contact your healthcare providers and notify them that you are bringing a patient with Covid-19. This will help them take preventive measures to prevent the spread to others.
- 3 You and the patient should wear a mask if you are in the same room. Discard disposable masks and gloves after use. Do not use them again.
- 4 Wear disposable gloves when handling dirty items, and keep these items away from your body. Wash your hands immediately (with soap and water, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer) after removing your gloves.
- 5 Prohibit visits from those who do not have an essential need to be in the house or place of care.
- 6 Keep other household members away from the patient. It is suggested to use a separate bedroom and bathroom, if possible.
- 7 Make sure the shared spaces in the home have good air circulation, either through an air conditioning system or an open window.
- 8 Avoid sharing personal use items with the patient. Dishes, glasses, cups, cutlery, towels, bed linen or other items should not be shared. After the patient uses the items, they should be washed thoroughly.

- 9 Help with basic household needs and provide support with food preparation, prescriptions and other personal needs.
- 10 Clean all frequent contact surfaces every day, such as tables, doorknobs, bathroom faucets, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets and nightstands. Also clean all surfaces that may contain blood, feces or bodily fluids.
- 11 Wash clothes thoroughly. Immediately remove and wash clothing or bedding that has blood, feces or bodily fluids.
- 12 Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or clean them with a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60-95% alcohol. Cover all the surfaces of your hands, and rub them until they feel dry. If your hands are visibly dirty, it is preferable to use soap and water.
- 13 Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth without washing your hands.
- 14 When removing personal protective equipment, remove and discard the gloves first. Then wash your hands immediately with soap and water, or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Then remove and throw away the mask and wash your hands immediately again with soap and water, or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- 15 Place all used gloves, masks and disposable items in a plastic bag before throwing them away with regular household trash. Wash your hands immediately after handling these items. If your hands are visibly dirty, it is preferable to use soap and water

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Orientation services and phone consulting, with healthcare professionals addressing concerns regarding the correct management of medical conditions and symptoms.

Reference:

Interim Guide to Preventing the Spread of the Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-2019) in Homes and Residential Communities <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-prevent-spread-sp.html>

USING A MASK



The use of face masks to protect against the spread of respiratory diseases such as Covid-19, the flu and mycoplasma does not guarantee that it will not spread the infection. Studies have not shown a clear benefit from wearing a mask if the person is healthy. If you don't have respiratory symptoms, you don't need to wear a mask.

The Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO) recommends the use of face masks:

- If you have respiratory symptoms such as coughing, sneezing or shortness of breath.
- When you visit an urgent care center, emergency room or doctor's office to protect those around you.
- If you are caring for a sick person with respiratory symptoms.

How do I put on, use, remove and discard the mask?

Some research shows that people can become infected by touching a contaminated mask they've been wearing, or by removing it incorrectly. The following measures are recommended for using a mask:

- Before putting on a mask, wash your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer or soap and water.
- Cover your mouth and nose with the mask and make sure there are no gaps between your face and the mask.
- Avoid touching the mask while wearing it. If you do, wash your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer or with soap and water.
- Replace the mask with a new one as soon as it becomes wet. Don't reuse disposable masks.
- To take the mask off, remove it from behind (do not touch the front of the mask), discard it immediately in a waste can with a lid. Wash your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer or with soap and water.

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Reference: <https://www.paho.org>

AVOID CONTAGION

PROTECT YOURSELF AND OTHERS FROM RESPIRATORY DISEASES, SUCH AS COVID-19, THE FLU, AND MYCOPLASMA



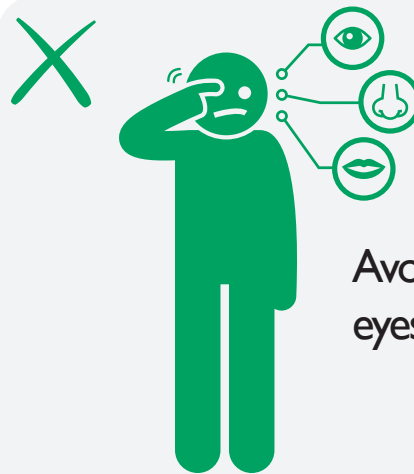
Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in a trash can immediately.



If you don't have a tissue or disposable towel, cover your mouth with your forearm when coughing or sneezing.



Always wash your hands for 20 seconds. If there is no soap and water, use a hand sanitizer.



Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.

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Orientation services and phone consulting, with healthcare professionals addressing concerns regarding the correct management of medical conditions and symptoms.

References: <https://www.cdc.gov>; <https://www.paho.org>

Provider Services Call Center

787.620.2535

(Metro area)

1.800.981.4766

(Toll free)

Monday to Friday – 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Saturday – 8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

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