

You have been diagnosed with the novel Coronavirus known as COVID-19. As of today you are well enough to manage your illness at home. Please follow these instructions to learn how to keep yourself and others safe as you recover.

About COVID-19

COVID-19 affects different people in different ways. It is a virus that spreads easily through tiny droplets and usually causes fever, cough or trouble breathing. You may have chills, muscle aches, loss of taste and smell, or stomach upset. Infected people have a wide range of symptoms and some may start to feel worse in the second week of their illness. It is important to call your doctor when your breathing is getting worse (harder and faster than before or you feel like you are getting less air).

Below are some recommendations to help manage your COVID-19 symptoms at home.

Self-isolate at home.

Try to stay in one place in your home, and use a separate bathroom if you can.

Wear a mask, and ask your family members to do the same.

Do not eat together in the same room if possible or share any foods/utensils. Protect your loved ones by avoiding contact with other people.

It is recommended you quarantine yourself for at least 10 days to “prevent the spread” after symptom onset.

Do not handle pets or other animals while sick.

Do not go to work, school, or public areas; avoid using public transportation, ride-sharing, or taxis.

Notify your close contacts.

People that you live with should self-isolate for 10 days AFTER your self-isolation period ends.

Other close contacts such as caretakers and intimate partners should self-isolate for 10 days AFTER your last contact with them.

Your close contacts should self-monitor for symptoms by checking their temperature twice a day and watching for fever, cough, or shortness of breath. *They should contact their doctor if they develop symptoms of COVID-19.*

They should also clean hands often and avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands. They should wear a mask if they have to be in the same room as you if you are not able to wear one.

Rest and stay hydrated.

When you are ill, getting enough time for rest is crucial for making a speedy recovery. You lose more water when you are sick, and dehydration can make your symptoms worse, causing more health problems.

Choose water and other caffeine-free clear liquids until you feel better.

If you have kidney, heart or liver disease you may have to limit your fluids. *Talk with your doctor before increasing the amount of fluids you drink.*

Take medications as prescribed.

Call your doctor with questions about any medications. You may take acetaminophen (Tylenol®) 650 mg every six hours and or ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®) 600 mg every 6 to 8 hours as needed to reduce fever, muscle aches, or other pains.

Please check with your doctor before taking these medications if you have any kidney or liver problems.

Soothe a sore throat by gargling with warm salt water.

Make salt water by dissolving ¼ teaspoon salt in 1 cup warm water (8 ounces). Older children and adults can also use throat lozenges, ice chips, or sore throat spray.

Use saline nasal drops if suggested by your health care provider to relieve congestion.

Apply petroleum-based jelly around the outside of nostrils to decrease irritation from blowing your nose.

DO NOT smoke or vape.

Nicotine and other chemicals in cigarettes and cigars can make your symptoms worse.

Additional Resources

- South County Health (www.southcountyhealth.org)
- Rhode Island Department of Health (covid.ri.gov)
- CDC Coronavirus Website (www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov)
- CDC Coronavirus Frequently Asked Questions (www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq)

CORONAVIRUS-19 (COVID-19)

DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS

Monitor your symptoms.

Take your temperature several times each day. *Call your doctor if you start to feel worse, including if you have increased congestion, chest pain, coughing or fever greater than 100.4 F by mouth.*

Sanitize.

Wash your hands frequently for at least 20 seconds with soap and water.

You may use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.

Cover your cough and sneeze with the inside of your elbow and tissue.

Clean all high-touch surfaces frequently – countertops, door handles, and table tops for example.

Use household cleaning sprays or wipes following the directions on the label.

Do not share personal items such as dishes, glasses, or utensils.

Ease your breathing.

Dry air can increase cough, and using a humidifier or a hot shower may help.

If you don't have a humidifier you can turn the shower on hot, close the bathroom door and inhale the warm moist air that is created.

Laying on your stomach at different times during the day will also help you breathe better.

Measure your oxygen levels.

Your doctor may recommend using a pulse oximeter. This device is placed on your finger (follow device instructions). It uses light to test the amount of oxygen in your blood.

If a pulse oximeter is medically necessary, your doctor may order one for you or one may be provided by the hospital. It is also readily available from multiple online vendors or at local pharmacies for about \$40.

If your oxygen level is normal (greater than 92%), it is safe to stay home.

If your oxygen level is less than 92% for a period of several minutes, or if it drops below 92% or more with mild exercise such as walking around your home, **contact your doctor.**

Instructions for pulse oximeter

A clip-like device called a probe will be placed on your finger.

You will get the best measurement when your hand is warm, relaxed and at the level of your heart.

Make sure all nail polish is removed.

- Turn on the unit with the power button (if it does not turn on, check the batteries)
- Place finger in the unit and wait for the number to display
- In addition to the oxygen percent, the unit might display heart rate and the waveform of the pulse.
- The probe may be left on for several minutes for ongoing monitoring, and the best number reading should be recorded. If you see a number less than 92%, please check it on another hand or finger to confirm.
- Clean and disinfect by following the manufacturers instruction.

Home oxygen.

If you have been ordered to go home with oxygen, use as directed by your doctor.

Doctor visits.

Call ahead so they can prepare for your visit.

Wear a face mask.

Make sure you have an appointment with your health care provider within the next 2-3 days of being discharged.

Manage stress and anxiety.

Being ill can be stressful or cause anxiety. Remember that everyone reacts differently to stressful situations. It is not unusual to feel depressed.

Don't be embarrassed to talk to your doctor about your mental health - it is just as important as your physical health! 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)

When to seek emergency medical attention

If someone is showing any of these signs, seek emergency medical care immediately:

- Trouble breathing/shortness of breath
- Pulse oximetry reading less than 92% for a period of several minutes
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion
- Inability to wake or stay awake
- Bluish lips or face

This list does not represent all possible symptoms of COVID-19.

Please call your medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning to you.

*Thank you for trusting South County Hospital for your health care needs.
The health and safety of our patients and families is our top priority.*