BASIC HAND HYGIENE

If you are looking after a loved one at home who is COVID-19 positive, you need to be able to protect yourself from getting the virus. The BEST WAY to do this is to ensure good and proper HAND HYGIENE. This means that you need to wash your hands regularly.

How to handwash

Use: soap and water

Steps:
1. Wet the hands
2. Apply the soap onto the hands
3. Rub the hands together for 20 seconds, making sure you rub the front and back, between fingers and under the nails.
4. Rinse the hands under running water.
5. Dry the hands with a clean towel or paper towel if possible.

*If no running water, wash hands in a basin or bucket with soap. Discard the water away from the house.

*The towel assigned to the COVID-19 patient should not be shared with other members of the household.

Wash your hands:
- Before, during and after preparing food or eating
- Before and after caring for sick person or a wound
- Before and after entering public place, taxi or bus
- After using the toilet or changing the patient’s nappy
- After blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing
- After touching an animal or animal food
- After handling garbage

Sanitizer

Hand sanitizing:
- Sanitizer can also be used in between washing hands when working with the patient. Sanitizer needs to contain at least 70% alcohol to be effective. SANITIZING DOES NOT REPLACE HANDWASHING
- Keep a bottle of sanitizer in the patient’s room where they are staying in the home and use after washing hands when going in and out of the room.

Sanitizing surfaces:
- Surfaces in the patient’s bedroom and through the house, especially the bathroom, if shared, need to be sanitized. You can use six (6) tablespoons of bleach mixed with four (4) cups of water.
The virus can spread through droplets, when people sneeze, cough and talk, therefore it is **VITAL** that you wear a mask. Masks can be made from 3-layers of fabric. These masks need to be worn **AT ALL TIMES** when working with the patient and should be washed in hot water at the end of every day, dried and ironed before next use. It is wise to have more than one mask so you can have a clean one on and the other can be washed. If you do not have a mask you can use a scarf or bandana too **BUT REMEMBER THE MASK/SCARF/BANDANA MUST COVER YOUR NOSE AND MOUTH AT ALL TIMES**.

*See the poster below for information on how to safely wear your mask at home and when caring for your loved one*

**Masks**

The virus can spread through droplets, when people sneeze, cough and talk, therefore it is **VITAL** that you wear a mask. Masks can be made from 3-layers of fabric. These masks need to be worn **AT ALL TIMES** when working with the patient and should be washed in hot water at the end of every day, dried and ironed before next use. It is wise to have more than one mask so you can have a clean one on and the other can be washed. If you do not have a mask you can use a scarf or bandana too **BUT REMEMBER THE MASK/SCARF/BANDANA MUST COVER YOUR NOSE AND MOUTH AT ALL TIMES**.

*See the poster below for information on how to safely wear your mask at home and when caring for your loved one*

**Storing your mask safely**

When looking after your loved one at home you will be wearing your mask inside their room when you are working with them (feeding them, bathing them etc). Once you have finished and exit the room, you will need to remove your mask, so you do not spread the droplets that may have settled on the outside of the mask to anyone else in the house. You will therefore need to safely remove and store your mask for when you next need to go into the room during that same day (**remember masks must be washed and dried, then ironed at the end of each of day**). Below are some ways that you can safely remove and store your mask:

**Using a Ziploc (sealable plastic) bag:**

- ALWAYS remove the mask from behind touching ONLY the straps/ties of the mask.
- NEVER touch the front of the mask.
- Place the mask into the Ziploc bag and seal it.
- Spray the bag with sanitizer or wipe it down with a cloth and warm soapy water. **WASH**
YOUR HANDS AFTERWARDS.

- Store safely out of reach of children.
- When you need to use the mask again, open the bag and take the mask out TOUCHING ONLY THE STRAPS/TIES NEVER THE FRONT OF THE MASK. Place it over the nose and mouth and wash hands afterwards.

Using a plastic rectangular shaped container:

- Choose a container that has a lid and will fit your mask fully inside, and able to cover your nose and mouth.
- Make some small holes in the sides of the container, to let air into the container.
- When finished wearing your mask, take the lid of the container off.
- With one hand place the container over your nose and mouth area, covering your mask fully. You will touch the outside of the container not your mask.
- For a mask with "over the head straps": With your other hand bring the straps from the back of the head over to the front, and over the outside of the container.
- For a mask with ear loops: With the other hand undo the ear loops from the ears.
- The mask will then be inside the container and you can remove the container from the face and put the lid in place.
- Spray the container wipe it down with a wet, soapy cloth.
- WASH YOUR HANDS AFTER THIS.
- Store safely out of reach of children.
- When you need to use the mask again, wash your hands, take the lid off of the container.
- Holding the outside of the container with one hand, place the mask over your nose and mouth area, then using the other hand pull the straps over the head or put the ear loops in place.
- WASH YOUR HANDS AFTER THIS.

**NOTE:** storing your mask safely when not using it, does not replace washing your mask. Masks must still be washed at the end of the day.
How to Wear a Non-Medical Fabric Mask Safely

**Do's**

- Adjust the mask to your face without leaving gaps on the sides.
- Cover your mouth, nose, and chin.
- Avoid touching the mask.
- Clean your hands before touching the mask.
- Inspect the mask for damage or if dirty.
- Pull the mask away from your face.
- Store the mask in a clean plastic, resealable bag if it is not dirty or wet and you plan to re-use it.
- Remove the mask by the straps behind the ears or head.
- Wash the mask in soap or detergent, preferably with hot water, at least once a day.
- Clean your hands after removing the mask.

**Don’ts**

- Do not use a mask that looks damaged.
- Do not wear a loose mask.
- Do not wear the mask under the nose.
- Do not remove the mask where there are people within 1 metre.
- Do not use a mask that is difficult to breathe through.
- Do not wear a dirty or wet mask.
- Do not share your mask with others.

A fabric mask can protect others around you. To protect yourself and prevent the spread of COVID-19, remember to keep at least 1 metre distance from others, clean your hands frequently and thoroughly, and avoid touching your face and mask.
A mask is the most important protection for the face. Eye protection is not always needed. Eye protection is a good idea when the patient is coughing or talking a lot and you are close to them while you care for them, such as washing, changing etc. Or if the patient struggles to wear a mask due to breathlessness and feeling anxious. Goggles and face-shields are used to protect the eyes from droplets entering, as well as prevent you from touching/rubbing the eyes without thinking and with hands that have not been washed and may carry the virus. At home you can wear your normal glasses to protect the eyes or you can try and make a “face-shield” that can be worn while working with the patient.

**To make the face-shield you will need the following:**

- A plastic or firm fabric headband (Alice band)
- A plastic sleeve for filing papers

1. The plastic sleeve has one side with a strip that has holes in it. At the bottom of this strip you will find an opening.

2. Take the head band and insert one end of the headband into this opening, feed the head band through the opening until you reach the other side of the strip.

3. Once the headband is all the way through, make sure the plastic sleeve is not “bunched up” anywhere along the headband.

4. You can now place the head band around the top of the forehead with the ends of the head band facing towards the back of the head. This will form your face shield.

5. When using the face shield, you STILL need to use a mask, the mask will be placed on first, as usual and the face shield will go on after.

6. ALWAYS wash your hands before and after putting the face shield on and try to only touch the sides of the headband not the front of the face-shield.

7. The face shield can be cleaned with an alcohol-based sanitizer spray or hot soapy water and left to dry, out of reach of children.

You can access a video on this here: [https://youtu.be/fw7z9Xe4b78](https://youtu.be/fw7z9Xe4b78)
**APRONS**

Wearing an Apron can help prevent the droplets that are sneezed/coughed by the patient from landing onto your clothes and spreading the virus to others.

- The apron would be worn ONLY in the room with the patient.
- Once finished working with the patient you would remove the apron before leaving the room.
- Leave the apron in the room, preferably hanging up off the floor, so it is ready for use the next time you need it.
- You would WASH and sanitize your hands after touching the apron.

**Making your own apron**

An apron can easily be made using a black refuse bag. Below is one way of making the apron from a bag.

- Cut a round hole in the bottom of the bag (the sealed side), this is for your head to go through.
- Cut a smaller hole on each side of the bag for your arms to go through.
- The bag can then be put over the head and the arms can slide through either side. This will protect your clothing.
- When taking the bag off or putting the bag on try to touch the outside as little as possible and make sure you wash your hands after touching the bag.
- ONLY wear the bag when working with the patient, REMOVE when finished, do not wear around the house.
- At the end of each day spray the bag with sanitizer or wipe it down with a soapy cloth and let dry.
- Discard the bag if it gets torn.
- To discard, ensure that the bag is placed into a waste bin lined with a packet and then the packet is closed and put into another bag (double bagged) which can be left outside for 3-5 days and then added to the rubbish for collection by the garbage truck.

The picture below shows you a way to make an apron from a garbage bag with ties that will go around the neck and the waist. This could also be used for protecting the clothes.

![Image of an apron made from a garbage bag](https://i.pinimg.com/originals/4e/f4/7f/4ef47f6ce8e4273164da4f12468ff0dd.jpg)