



## COVID-19 Risk Management for Caregivers

### TOPIC DESCRIPTION

This Topic is designed to help a Caregiver and Care Recipient understand COVID-19 risk management methods. Following a brief Introduction, there are 3 method sections: hand washing, respiratory etiquette, and social distancing to reduce the risk of contracting and spreading COVID-19. Each method includes the following subsections:

**Say: "Build Awareness":** *Conversation starters that set a supportive tone when introducing the Topic.*

**Act: "Identify Next Steps":** *Optional resources and solutions to educate and support the caregiver.*

### Topic Introduction

#### Say: "Build Awareness"

There is a lot on the news about Coronavirus, or COVID-19. This news might make you feel scared and nervous. That is okay. Those feelings are normal. There is a lot to understand about ways to stay safe and keep others safe from the spread of COVID-19.

There are three well-discussed and recommended ways for you to keep yourself and the community safe from the spread of illness. They include hand washing, respiratory (coughing and sneezing) etiquette, and social distancing. Let's talk about each step at a time. Talking through these preventative steps can help you understand ways to protect yourself and those in your community from getting sick!

### Hand Washing

#### Say: "Build Awareness"

Let's talk about hand washing. Hand washing is one of the most effective ways to reduce the spread of germs, illness, and disease. Reducing the spread of illness helps keep everyone safe and healthy.

To wash hands effectively, start by wetting hands with warm water. Apply soap and rub your hands together until the soap makes a lather. Rub the soapy lather between your fingers, on the back and palm of your hands, and under and around your fingernails. Scrub well for at least 20 seconds or as long as it takes to sing the full "Happy Birthday" song twice. Rinse your hands well under running water. Point your hands down as you rinse so the dirty water runs down into the sink. Dry your hands with a clean, dry towel. It is important to dry your hands thoroughly. You may also use the towel to turn off the running water.

Hand washing should happen any time a person feels they should clean their hands. There are also times when hand washing is extra important to keep yourself and others safe and healthy. It is important to wash hands before and after providing care, or when interacting with the Care Recipient. This includes times when you prepare food for the Care Recipient or bring them something to eat or drink. It is good to be extra careful and wash hands before spending time with them and keeping them company, even if you are just watching a favorite show together.

Many people wash hands as soon as they come into the home. This routine reduces the spread of illness from public areas. It is good to wash hands before and after a meal. This prevents germs from spreading from your hands to your mouth or face when eating. It is important to wash hands after using the toilet, cleaning human waste, taking out the trash, or touching pets.

Some people are extra cautious when they are using their hands in public. They may use their sleeve or a tissue to open doors. These are good ways to reduce the chance of getting sick, but frequent and thorough hand washing is the best way to prevent infection. Hand sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol-based is a good substitute when you cannot wash your hands. Hand washing is a great preventative step toward avoiding getting and spreading a sickness.

### Act: "Identify Next Steps"

- ✓ Share and Review the Johns Hopkins Medicine video, "Hand washing Steps Using the WHO Technique" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lisgnbMfKvI>)
- ✓ Share and Review the Seniorlink article, "Importance of Hand Washing"
- ✓ Share and Review the World Health Organization article, "Clean Hands Protect Against Infection" ([https://www.who.int/gpsc/clean\\_hands\\_protection/en/](https://www.who.int/gpsc/clean_hands_protection/en/))
- ✓ Share and Review the CDC video, "What You Need To Know About Hand washing" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d914EnpU4Fo>)
- ✓ Share and Review the CDC video, "Clean Hands Count" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MzkNSzqmUSY>)

## Respiratory Etiquette (Coughing and Sneezing)

### Say: "Build Awareness"

One of the best ways to stay safe from illness is having good respiratory etiquette. Respiratory etiquette means using cough and sneeze hygiene. One of the main concerns for COVID-19 is that it can spread between people. It can spread when an infected person coughs or sneezes and the droplets from this cough or sneeze come in contact with another person. The droplets of water from a cough or sneeze may contain the virus. If these droplets get into another person's mouth or nose or are inhaled, they may get sick. These droplets can also get onto a person's hands. The virus on a person's hands may lead to infection when a

person puts their hands on or in their mouth, nose, and eyes. This is why respiratory etiquette is so important. This is why it is also so important to wash your hands!

There are a few ways to cough and sneeze that can help prevent the spread of germs and illness. You can cough or sneeze into the inside of your elbow or upper arm. This puts the droplets from the cough or sneeze in a place where a person is not likely to touch. You can use a tissue to cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze. Using a tissue can protect your hands from germs. It is important to carry tissues when you have a cough or cold. It is also important to throw the tissue away in the trash as soon as you have used it. You should also wash your hands after a cough or sneeze. Even if you use a tissue to cover your mouth, germs can soak through a tissue! If you cannot wash your hands immediately, you can use alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

### Act: "Identify Next Steps"

- ✓ Share and Review the CDC article, "Coughing & Sneezing" ([https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/hygiene/etiquette/coughing\\_sneezing.html](https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/hygiene/etiquette/coughing_sneezing.html))
- ✓ Share and Review the Veterans Health Administration video, "Respiratory Etiquette" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d6velmR2RKQ>)

## Social Distancing

### Say: "Build Awareness"

The third and final way to keep yourself and your community safe from the spread of COVID-19 is called, "social distancing." It's important to stay socially connected during these times. It is also important for people to keep apart physically.

In an effort to slow the spread of COVID-19, many organizations have cancelled events. People have cancelled social outings. Even offices are having employees work from home! These measures are put in place to help people be physically apart as much as possible.

When social distancing, groups should be limited to ten people or less. It is also recommended to stay six feet apart from another person. This means no hugging or shaking hands. Keeping this physical distance and keeping social groups smaller may reduce the risk of the spread of COVID-19.

Staying at home can be hard. It might get boring and you might feel antsy. People might feel lonely or become depressed. It is still important to find ways to feel connected! Practicing social distancing doesn't mean disconnecting socially. It is good to call and FaceTime with friends and family. It can also be a good time to explore new hobbies and get some rest!

## Act: "Identify Next Steps"

- ✓ Share and Review the Louis Bloomfield video, "The Importance of Social Distancing during the COVID-19 Pandemic"  
([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H\\_fFYICwmho&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H_fFYICwmho&feature=youtu.be))
- ✓ Share and Review the Hopkins Medicine article, "Coronavirus, Social Distancing, and Self-Quarantine" (<https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/coronavirus/coronavirus-social-distancing-and-self-quarantine>)
- ✓ Share and Review the SAMHSA article, "Tips For Social Distancing, Quarantine, And Isolation During An Infectious Disease Outbreak"  
(<https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/tips-social-distancing-quarantine-isolation-031620.pdf>)
- ✓ Share and Review the CDC article, "Stress and Coping"  
(<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/managing-stress-anxiety.html>)