

# Keeping Your Loved Ones Safe During the COVID-19 Outbreak

## Summary:

- **The most important thing you can do to protect your loved ones from COVID-19 infection is to protect yourself.**
- **There are simple steps you can take in effort to reduce the risk of bringing viruses from work into your home.**
- **Young children who catch COVID-19 usually have mild symptoms**
- **Limited information is available regarding COVID-19 during pregnancy – please consult with your physician**
- **An important aspect of protecting yourself is maintaining your mental health.**

The COVID-19 outbreak represents an unprecedented challenge for health care systems globally. As always, our top priority is the safety of our teammates, our patients and their loved ones. We recognize that many of you have concerns about whether your work with patients might place your loved ones at risk of COVID-19.

**The most important thing you can do to protect your loved ones from COVID-19 is to protect yourself.**

COVID-19 is a viral respiratory illness, with droplet-borne route of transmission. Proper personal protective equipment (PPE) including masks, gowns, gloves, and careful hand hygiene each help prevent disease transmission. Used together, they provide multiple layers of protection against infection.

## Infection Control Routines.

Here are some additional ideas:

### Before Work

- Remove watch, earrings and rings – a plain wedding band is acceptable.
- Remove artificial nails, nail extenders or nail enhancements (e.g., nail tips), as per our usual policy
- Minimize the number of personal items (e.g., jackets, backpacks, lunch boxes) that you bring into your facility.
- Place cell phone in secure area prior to caring for patients. Sanitize phone routinely.

### After Work, before leaving the facility

- Remove and dispose of all masks, gowns, and gloves correctly, so that you are not exposed to any viruses that may be present on the outside of these items.<sup>1</sup>
- Wash hand/arms (exposed skin) with soap and water.
- Wipe shoes with disinfectant and wash your hands.
- Sanitize badge on your way out.

### Getting home

- Leave your work shoes at the door of your home to avoid tracking in germs.
- Clean and disinfect any personal items that you brought into your facility before bringing them inside your home.<sup>2</sup>
- Store used scrubs and other clothing that you wore at work in a sealed plastic bag until you are ready to wash them.
- Wash your scrubs and other clothing that you wore at work using hot water and detergent, and dry them thoroughly after washing.
  - Do not shake out the clothes before washing them, since that can release viruses into the air.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/hai/pdfs/ppe/PPE-Sequence.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/cleaning-disinfection.html>

- Add chlorine bleach or another household disinfectant to your laundry to help to neutralize viruses.<sup>3</sup>
- Wash any dishes and your lunch container in the dishwasher or with hot soapy water.

### COVID-19 Risks to Children and Pregnant Women

Another concern is the risks of COVID-19 for children. Young children do not seem to be any more likely to catch COVID-19 than adults. And, children who do contract COVID-19 tend to have mild symptoms such as a runny nose, fever, or cough.<sup>4</sup> The chance that young children will get severely ill if they are exposed to COVID-19 is low.

We have also received questions regarding the possible impact of COVID-19 on pregnant women and their developing babies. Right now, there is very little information available about COVID-19 during pregnancy. As far as we know, pregnant women are no more likely to get COVID-19 than anyone else. Because of this, the CDC recommends that pregnant health care personnel follow the same safety practices and procedures as non-pregnant personnel.<sup>5</sup> It is unclear whether or not the virus can pass from a pregnant mother who catches COVID-19 to the developing baby, because the number of pregnant women with COVID-19 who have been studied is extremely small.<sup>6</sup> As more information becomes available, the answer to this question should become clearer. In the meantime, if you are pregnant and have concerns about COVID-19, the best thing to do is to discuss them with your doctor.

### Educate and encourage your loved ones to follow this advice from the CDC for everyone

- Practice social distancing when you do have to go out
- Wash your hands
- Do not touch your face
- Cover cough and sneezes with elbow
- Routinely sanitize frequently touched surfaces.

### Managing Uncertainty During COVID-19

We recognize that caring for patients during this time is really hard. To be able to care for yourself and your loved ones, it is very important to monitor and manage your own emotions and mental health.

DaVita's clinical leadership is in lockstep with the CDC and WHO, and will continue to actively monitor the COVID-19 situation and keep you informed. With the situation rapidly evolving around COVID-19, it is important to remember that we are all in this together. Protecting you and the safety of your loved ones is our top priority.

You are providing critical care to our patients, every day – we cannot thank you enough for all that you do!

One for All!

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/guidelines/environmental/background/laundry.html>

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html?CDC\\_AA\\_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fprepare%2Fchildren-faq.html#anchor\\_1584387482747](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fprepare%2Fchildren-faq.html#anchor_1584387482747)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/faq.html>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0140673620303603>