

Best Practices for Healthcare Workers to Limit Spread of COVID-19 in the Household

There is a lack of evidence based studies on the optimal procedures for healthcare employees to minimize transference of the novel coronavirus to their households. However, many established general principles can be employed as best practices to guide the actions of employees returning home from work¹.

Before coming to work:

1. Avoid bringing unnecessary personal items to work to limit possible contamination of personal items that must be disinfected after the shift. If brought to work, consider leaving items such as cell phones away from the work areas in a disposable plastic bag. Carry credit cards and driver's licenses' in the bag without a wallet for easy clean up.
2. Bring lunch items that can be packed in disposable containers where possible. Carry items in a receptacle that can be easily wiped down or laundered as described below (hard metal, cloth grocery bag, etc.).
3. Consider avoiding all public/shared transportation including ride-sharing such as Lyft or Uber. Alternate transportation with personal cars or Blue Bikes is currently free for 30 days for travel within the city of Boston with (the code BUMCBLUE).

During the workday:

1. Follow all recommendations regarding hand hygiene and the donning, usage, and doffing of PPE or other protective devices.

After Work:

1. Remove all clothing and footwear worn during the work day and proceed to a shower as soon as possible. If available, change at work. If you will be bringing your clothing and shoes home, place them directly in a disposable plastic bag for transport. Soap and scrub from the top of the head and move downward².
2. If you are unable to change your clothing at work, plan to remove clothing before entering your home in a garage, mudroom, or other designated area away from your household living space. Have a dedicated receptacle ready for your laundry and shoes in this location.
3. When arriving home, proceed directly to the bathroom, avoiding contact with household members, pets, and objects or surfaces. If possible, use a separate bathroom from other members of your household. If you were unable to shower at work, do so immediately when you enter the bathroom. Otherwise, complete hand hygiene.
4. **Laundering work clothes:** If laundering work clothes at home, wash in a separate load with the warmest water and dryer settings indicated by the garment label³. Wear disposable gloves and avoid shaking the garments. Perform proper hand hygiene after handling clothing⁴.
5. **Consider social distancing:** Maintain your distance from vulnerable household members (elderly, immunocompromised, comorbidities) as much as possible. Avoid sharing rooms, bathrooms, linens, dishware or other personal items⁵. If distancing within the home is not possible, consider exploring free temporary housing options such as through Airbnb or temporary hotels.
6. **Disinfection of personal items:** Items that were brought into the work area such as ID badges, stethoscopes, pens, phones, wallets, etc. can be sanitized with household disinfectant products, bleach dilutions (4 tsp/1 qt water), and solutions containing 70% Ethanol or 0.1% sodium hypochlorite^{6,7}. Use the product best suited to the item or surface based on manufacturer's specifications.

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