

If Someone in Your Home is Sick

A dementia patient is currently not considered to be in the high-risk group for COVID-19, but like all of your family members, they need to be protected if someone in your house comes down with the virus. Follow these guidelines to reduce the risk of it spreading and to create as healthy a living environment as possible for the person who is ill and for the rest of your household.

Get a Professional's Opinion

Call your doctor's office before going in, including urgent care or a hospital, unless experiencing life threatening symptoms. It is much better to keep an Alzheimer's patient at home to treat, since this is the environment they are most comfortable in. Caring for them at home is still the preferred recommendation. Ask if the physician recommends testing for COVID-19 and where the closest location is. If you are driving the individual, you should both wear face masks and keep car windows open.

Social Distancing

Droplets spread among people who are less than six feet apart, so you do your best to create social distancing at all times. The sick person should be restricted to designated spaces, including their own bedroom and bathroom if that is feasible.

In common areas, it is important to make sure there is good airflow. Open windows and/or run a fan to increase circulation. The patient should wear a mask if they need to use this space. Bandanas or scarves are other options if a face mask is not available.

Do not share with the person who is sick. This includes towels and bedding, food and drinks, utensils, plates, glasses, and electronics (including cell phones, gaming and tv remotes). Completely wash everything in hot soapy water.

Sterilization

Frequently clean and sterilize high- touch areas, including door knob, sinks, toilets, light switches, and counter tops. If the sick person feels up to it, they should be responsible for cleaning their own bathroom and living space. Use a lined trash can dedicated to their waste, as well as any gloves or contaminated items. If they do need assistance, one dedicated person should be responsible and take precautions to protect themselves from the rest of the household.

Safely Attend to Patient's Personal Needs

Help them to hydrate with clear fluids and assist with pain medication, like acetaminophen, as recommended. Cough medicine, as directed on the label and by a physician should also be monitored if needed. Keep them as comfortable as possible and wear a mask when you serve their meals to/from a table in their room. Provide as much emotional support as you can, but from a distance, even if you use virtual communication from within the same house.

Laundry

When washing the patient's laundry, it is probably best to separate it into a new load, and also to protect yourself by wearing gloves. Include any items that were worn in the days prior to their diagnosis. Do not shake their items and use the warmest temperature setting you can, according to label instructions. Disinfect the clothes hamper. Wash your hands after you clean the hamper and after you place the clothes in the dryer.

Above all, please be sure to have everyone in your home practice good hygiene. Wash your hands frequently for at least 20 seconds with soap and hot water, and avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Everyone in the home should self- quarantine for two weeks and monitor for symptoms.