

# MIDDLE EAST RESPIRATORY SYNDROME CORONAVIRUS (MERS-COV)

## MICHIGAN INTERIM GUIDANCE FOR HOME ISOLATION AND CARE

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### GUIDANCE FOR INDIVIDUALS UNDER EVALUATION FOR MERS-COV

If you are being evaluated for a MERS-CoV infection and you have been told that you are under home isolation or to self-isolate, here are some prevention steps below to follow until your local or state health department says you can return to your normal activities. This general guidance for a patient under investigation (PUI) may be modified if you are considered high risk.

#### **Stay home and separate yourself from other people in your home**

- Avoid activities outside your home, except for getting medical care. Do not go to work, school, or public areas, and do not use public transportation or taxis. As much as possible, you should stay in a different room from other people in your home and have a separate sleeping area. Also, you should use a separate bathroom, if available.

#### **Wear a facemask**

- Wear a facemask when you are in the same room with other people and when you visit a healthcare provider. If you cannot wear a facemask, the people who live with you should wear one while they are in the same room with you.

#### **Cover your coughs and sneezes**

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Safely discard used tissues in a lined trash can, and immediately wash your hands with soap and water.

#### **Wash your hands**

- Wash your hands often and thoroughly with soap and water. You can use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available and if your hands are not visibly dirty. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

#### **Avoid sharing household items**

- Do not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, bedding, or other items with other people in your home. After using these items, wash them thoroughly with soap and water.

#### **Call ahead before visiting your doctor**

- Monitor your symptoms and seek prompt medical attention if your illness is worsening (e.g., difficulty breathing). **Before** going to any medical appointments, call the healthcare provider and tell them that you are being evaluated for a MERS-CoV infection. This will help the healthcare provider's office take steps to keep other people from getting infected. Ask your healthcare provider to call the local or state health department.

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## CARE AND PREVENTION GUIDANCE FOR CAREGIVERS AND HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS

If you live with, or provide care for a PUI under home isolation for a MERS-CoV infection, make sure that you understand and are in a position to help the person follow the healthcare provider's instructions for medication and care. In providing care for a sick person, you will likely be assisting with the individual's basic needs in the home and with getting groceries, prescriptions, and other personal needs. Make sure you have the necessary personal protective equipment to protect yourself from getting infected.

### **Limit person-to-person contact in the home**

- Have only people in the home who are essential for providing care for the ill person. One person should be the main caregiver.
- Ideally other household members should stay in another home or place of residence or be separated from the ill person as much as possible. Use a separate bathroom, if available.
- Keep elderly people and those who have compromised immune systems or certain health conditions away from the ill person. This includes people with chronic heart, lung or kidney conditions, and diabetes.

### **Use personal protective equipment**

- Wear a disposable facemask when in the same room with a person who is being evaluated for a MERS-CoV infection.
- Wear a disposable facemask, gown, and gloves when you touch or have contact with the ill person's body fluids and/or secretions, such as saliva, sputum, nasal mucus, vomit, urine, diarrhea, or blood.
- Discard disposable facemasks, gowns, and gloves safely in a lined trash can after each use. Do not reuse.
- Wash your hands immediately after removing your facemask, gown, and gloves.

### **Use good hand hygiene**

- Wash your hands often and thoroughly with soap and water.
- You can use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available and if your hands are not visibly dirty. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

### **Promote good air circulation**

- Make sure that shared spaces in the home have good air flow to decrease the spread of respiratory viruses.
- Use a fan, air conditioner or an opened window (weather permitting) to circulate fresh air.
- Allow sunlight into room to help kill coronaviruses.

### **Dishes and household items**

- Avoid sharing household items, such as dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, or other items with a person who is being evaluated for a MERS-CoV infection. Wash dishes after use in a dishwasher or with hot sudsy water.

### **Laundry, towels, bedding, linens**

- Avoid sharing towels, linens and similar items with a person who is being evaluated for a MERS-CoV infection.
- Immediately remove and wash clothes or bedding that have body fluids, secretions, or excretions on them.
- Wear disposable gloves while handling soiled items. Wash your hands immediately after removing gloves.
- Wash laundry thoroughly. Read and follow directions on labels of laundry or clothing items and detergent. In general, wash and dry with the warmest temperatures recommended on the clothing label.

### **Waste disposal**

- Remove all used gloves, gowns, and facemasks safely, and place these and any other contaminated items in a lined container and tie closed before disposing them with other household waste. Wash your hands immediately after handling these items.

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## CARE AND PREVENTION GUIDANCE FOR CAREGIVERS AND HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS (CONTINUED)

### Environmental cleaning and disinfection

- Do a daily cleaning of all “high-touch” surfaces, such as counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, bedside tables, and any children’s toys if the sick person is a child. Also, clean any surfaces that may have respiratory secretions, body fluids, and other excretions on them.
- Follow recommendations provided on cleaning product labels. Labels contain instructions for safe and effective use of the cleaning product including precautions you should take when applying the product, such as wearing gloves or aprons and making sure you have good ventilation during use of the product.
- Use a diluted bleach solution or a household disinfectant with a label that says “EPA-approved.” To make a bleach solution at home, add 1 tablespoon of fresh bleach to 1 quart (4 cups) of water. For a larger supply, add ¼ cup of fresh bleach to 1 gallon (16 cups) of water.

### Monitor symptoms

- Monitor the ill person’s symptoms. If they are getting sicker, call his or her medical provider and tell them that the person is being evaluated for a MERS-CoV infection. If you are told to bring the ill person in to see the provider or directly to the emergency department, the healthcare provider’s office will instruct you on what take steps to keep other people from getting infected. Ask the healthcare provider to call the local or state health department.
- Caregivers and household members who have not taken any precautions when in close contact with a person who is being evaluated for a MERS-CoV infection, are considered “close contacts” and should monitor their health as described below.
  - *Monitor your health starting from the day you were first exposed to the person and continue for 14 days after you were last exposed to the person. Watch for the following signs and symptoms:*
    - *Fever over 100°F (Normal body temperature is 98.6°F)*
    - *Coughing*
    - *Shortness of breath*
    - *Other symptoms such as chills, body aches, sore throat, headache, diarrhea, nausea/vomiting, runny nose*
  - *If you do not have any symptoms, you can continue with your daily activities, such as going to work, school, or other public areas.*
  - *If you develop symptoms, follow the prevention steps described above, and call your healthcare provider as soon as possible. **Before** going to your medical appointment, call the healthcare provider and tell them about your possible exposure to a PUI for MERS-CoV. This will help the healthcare provider’s office take steps to keep other people from getting infected. Ask your healthcare provider to call the local or state health department.*

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## RETURNING TO SCHOOL, WORK OR OTHER COMMUNITY SETTINGS

People who are under home isolation and being evaluated for MERS-CoV infection will need to be free of fever, without the use of fever-reducing medications, for at least 24 hours and cleared by public health before returning to school, work, or other community settings. After receiving clearance, continue to practice good respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene and avoid close contact with people that are at an increased risk of respiratory complications.

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## RESOURCES

Above guidance adapted from:

- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/mers/hcp/home-care.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/mers/hcp/home-care-patient.html>