



Best practices for personal care workers providing home care in the context of COVID-19

Disclaimer:

This *Quick Response Report* was published on June 30, 2020. Given the rapidly changing nature of the coronavirus pandemic, some of the references included in this report may quickly become out-of-date. We further caution readers that researchers at the Newfoundland & Labrador Centre for Applied Health Research are not experts on infectious diseases and are relaying work produced by others. This report has been produced quickly and it is not exhaustive, nor have the included studies been critically appraised.

Readers will note that some text below has been highlighted for emphasis.

Original Request

What are the best practices for personal care workers providing home care in the context of COVID-19?

Summary of Findings

- We identified 18 guidance documents from national and sub-national governments and public health agencies. While these documents differ in terms of the comprehensiveness of included guidelines for home care workers, they largely agree in terms of included practices, with core elements that include: infection prevention and control (IPC), personal protective equipment (PPE), screening (staff and patient/clients), and environmental cleaning and disinfection.
- We did not find any research publications or expert opinion that directly addresses best practices for personal care workers providing home care in the context of COVID-19. We did find some study protocols for future or ongoing research projects (not included below), which suggests that it may be reasonable to anticipate future research publications on this topic.
- We have included one *Cochrane Rapid Review* that addresses hospital healthcare workers' adherence to IPC measures in an effort to provide some insights about potential barriers and facilitators to effective implementation.

Guidance

Public Health Agency of Canada. **Infection prevention and control for COVID-19: Interim guidance for home care settings**. PHAC, April 24, 2020 [LINK](#) (1)

- Provides extensive “guidance specific to the COVID-19 pandemic for home care providers”, including both formal and informal providers:
 - [Infection prevention and control preparedness](#)
 - [Home safety risk assessment](#)
 - [Screening and management: Staff, Clients](#)
 - [Client care and infection control measures: Point-of-care risk assessment \(PCRA\), Hand hygiene, Routine Practices, Masking/eye protection for all staff providing care in the home for duration of visits, Droplet and Contact Precautions, Aerosol-generating medical procedures \(AGMPs\)](#)
 - [Handling of client care equipment and laundry](#)
 - [Environmental cleaning and disinfection](#)
 - [Client and household member education](#)

Related:

- Public Health Agency of Canada. **Community-based measures to mitigate the spread of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in Canada**. PHAC, May 30, 2020 [LINK](#) (2)

World Health Organization. **Home care for patients with COVID-19 presenting with mild symptoms and management of their contacts**. WHO, March 17, 2020 [LINK](#) (3)

- Guidance document covering a range of issues with homecare of patient/clients with COVID-19, including: IPC, PPE, cleaning, waste management, ventilation and managing contacts.

Department of Health and Social Care (UK). **Coronavirus (COVID-19): providing home care**. Gov.UK, June 24, 2020 [LINK](#) (4)

- “The document brings together guidance for social care staff, registered providers, local authorities and commissioners who support and deliver care to people in their own homes.”
- Includes information on: PPE, shielding and care groups, hospital discharge and testing.

Related:

- Public Health England. **COVID-19: how to work safely in domiciliary care in England**. PHE, June 15, 2020 [LINK](#) (5)
 - “A resource for those working in domiciliary care providing information on the use of personal protective equipment (PPE)”
 - Includes a PPE guidebook and information sheets for putting on and taking off PPE.
- Health Protection Scotland. **COVID-19: Guidance for Domiciliary Care**. Public Health Scotland, June 4, 2020 [LINK](#) (6)
 - Provides information and links on a range of COVID-19-related home care issues, including PPE an IPC, different client and caregiver infection combinations, environmental measures (including cleaning and waste), and staff health and wellbeing.

Department of Health (Australia). **Coronavirus (COVID-19) Guide for Home Care Providers**. Australian Government, May 21, 2020, [LINK](#) (7)

- Provides guidance for “providers of supports and services that assist people living at home”.
- Includes a preparation guide, best practices to protect service providers and patient/clients, and scenarios, and covers effective IPC and PPE use: putting on and removing PPE, safe disposal of PPE, how to reduce risk from aerosols, cleaning, laundry, staffing issues, patient/client issues.

- Also includes links to resources, training videos, and free online training programs.

Related:

- Australian Government Department of Health. **Coronavirus (COVID-19) – It’s ok to have home care.** April 9, 2020, [LINK](#) (8)
 - “An information sheet and infographic for older people who may have an aged care worker visiting them at home.”
- Australian Government Department of Health. **Coronavirus (COVID-19) information for in-home care workers.** May 1, 2020 [LINK](#) (9)
 - “An information sheet for in-home care workers about coronavirus (COVID-19).”

Ministry of Health NZ. **Caring for yourself and others who have, or may have, COVID-19 at home.** June 24, 2020 [LINK](#) (10)

- Fact sheet, seems intended for informal caregivers. Provides links to training modules.
- Includes information on: isolation and sheltering at home, IPC, ventilation.

Centres for Disease Control. **Interim Guidance for Implementing Home Care of People Not Requiring Hospitalization for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).** CDC, June 16, 2020 [LINK](#) (11)

- Provides description and linked information for “coordinating the home care and isolation of people with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 infection”, including assessing suitability of residence for home care and [infection and prevention control \(IPC\)](#).

Related:

- Centres for Disease Control. **Caring for Someone Sick at Home.** CDC, May 8, 2020 [LINK](#) (12)
 - Includes information on: monitoring, IPC, eating, PPE (including face masks), cleaning, and waste disposal.
- Centres for Disease Control. **Interim Guidance for Public Health Professionals Managing People With COVID-19 in Home Care and Isolation Who Have Pets or Other Animals.** CDC, April 23, 2020 [LINK](#) (13)

Alberta Health Services. **Information for Home Care Staff.** AHS, May 17, 2020 [LINK](#) (14)

- Provides linked information for [appropriate PPE](#), [continuous masking](#), [routine IPC practices](#), [point of care assessment \(PCRA\)](#), and worker self-assessment for [fitness for work](#).
- Includes best practice descriptions of and links to: client assessment and care, [self-testing and isolation](#), [waste disposal](#), [individual personal care health care attire](#); developing and implementing back-up plans, and staffing.

Related:

- Alberta Health Services. **Guidelines for Continuous Masking and Use of Face Shields in Home Care and Congregate Living Settings.** AHS, May 9, 2020 [LINK](#) (15)
- Alberta Health Services. **Continuing Care–Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) FAQ.** AHS, June 15, 2020 [LINK](#) (16)

Ministry of Health (ON). **COVID-19 Guidance: Home and Community Care Providers (Version 4).** MOHLTC, May 4, 2020 [LINK](#) (17)

- Provides basic guidance and linked information for home and community health care providers working one-on-one in terms of [self-monitoring](#), [patient/client screening](#).
- Describes updated screening and [masking recommendations](#).

Related:

- Ontario Personal Support Workers Association. **Emergency Homecare Protocols**. OPSWA, 2020 [LINK](#) (18)
 - Describes client screening, PPE, waste disposal, basic IPC, reporting.

Systematic Reviews

Houghton et al. **Barriers and facilitators to healthcare workers' adherence with infection prevention and control (IPC) guidelines for respiratory infectious diseases: a rapid qualitative evidence synthesis**. Cochrane Systematic Reviews, April 21, 2020 [LINK](#) (19)

- Focus is mainly on hospital health care workers, but findings may be applicable to personal care workers as well.

Other Reviews

None found.

Expert Opinion

None found.

Primary Research

None found.

News Articles

Clarke. CQC report reveals impact of COVID-19 on domiciliary care providers. Home Care Insight, May 21, 2020 [LINK](#) (20)

- News article about a report on homecare and COVID-19 in England, and key issues affecting homecare workers health, including difficulty accessing and using PPE, absenteeism, testing and personal impacts on homecare workers.

Related: Care Quality Commission. COVID-19 Insight. Presentation slides, May, 2020 [LINK](#) (21)

Methodology

Newfoundland and Labrador Centre for Applied Health Research (NLCAHR) COVID-19 Quick Response reports are initiated by, and shared with, our partners in the provincial health system, including the four Regional Health Authorities, the Departments of Health and Community Services and Children, Seniors and Social Development, and public health officials.

NLCAHR staff work with topic submitters to clarify the research question. We then search for related systematic reviews, meta-analyses, other reviews, interim and other guidance statements, primary research, expert opinion and health and science reporting.

We use several search strategies, with a focus on the following databases:

- [Alberta Health Services](#)
- [CADTH](#)
- [Canadian Pharmacists Association](#)
- [Campbell Collaboration](#)
- [Cochrane Collaboration](#)
- [Centre for Disease Control](#)
- [Centre for Evidence Based Medicine](#)
- [Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Co-ordinating Centre](#)
- [European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control](#)
- [Health Canada](#)
- [HIQA \(Ireland\)](#)
- [Joanna Briggs Institute](#)
- [MedRxiv](#)
- [National Collaborating Centres on Methods and Tools \(NCCMT\)](#)
- [National Institutes of Health](#)
- [National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases](#)
- [National Library of Medicine](#)
- [Public Health Agency of Canada](#)
- [Trip Database](#)
- [World Health Organization](#)

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