

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

# SARS-CoV-2 Infection Prevention and Control in Healthcare Settings Toolkit



**DOH 420-474 April 2024**

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# Abbreviations

**ABHS:** alcohol-based hand sanitizer

**ACH:** air changes per hour

**AGP:** aerosol generating procedure

**AIIR:** airborne infection isolation room

**ASHRAE:** American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers

**CDC:** [United States] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

**CMS:** [United States] Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services

**DOH:** [Washington State] Department of Health

**DOSH:** [Washington State Labor & Industries] Division of Occupational Safety and Health

**DSHS:** [Washington State] Department of Social and Health Services

**EPA:** [United States] Environmental Protection Agency

**EVS:** environmental services

**HCP:** healthcare personnel

**HSQA:** [Washington State Department of Health] Health Systems Quality Assurance

**LHJ:** local health jurisdiction

**LTCF:** long-term care facility

**L&I:** [Washington State Department of] Labor and Industries

**NAAT:** nucleic acid amplification test

**NIOSH:** National Institute of Occupational Health and Safety

**PCR:** polymerase chain reaction

**PPE:** personal protective equipment

**OSHA:** [United States] Occupational Safety and Health Administration

**TBP:** transmission-based precautions

**SARS-CoV-2:** severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2

**SNF:** skilled nursing facility (nursing home)

**WHO:** World Health Organization

# Background and Purpose

The Washington State Department of Health (DOH) developed this toolkit for healthcare settings to use to prevent transmission of severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), the virus that causes coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

Healthcare settings may use this toolkit to create flexible policies specific to their facility based on their individual risk assessment following [CDC's Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Healthcare Personnel During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) Pandemic](#).

## **The WA DOH is in full alignment with CDC's guidance as it pertains to healthcare and COVID-19.**

In general, healthcare settings should follow Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance to prevent transmission of SARS-CoV-2:

- [Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Healthcare Personnel During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) Pandemic](#)
- [Overview of Testing for SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19](#)
- [Interim Guidance for Managing HCP with SARS-CoV-2 Infection or Exposure to SARS-CoV-2](#)
- [Strategies to Mitigate HCP Staffing Shortages](#)  
[Conserving Supplies of Personal Protective Equipment in Healthcare Facilities during Shortages](#)

*Note: The resources in this document are not regulatory in nature except when required by a regulatory agency such as Washington State Department of Labor & Industries (L&I), Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), DOH-Health Systems Quality Assurance (HSQA), and Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS). When creating policy and procedures, healthcare settings should ensure they meet regulatory requirements.*

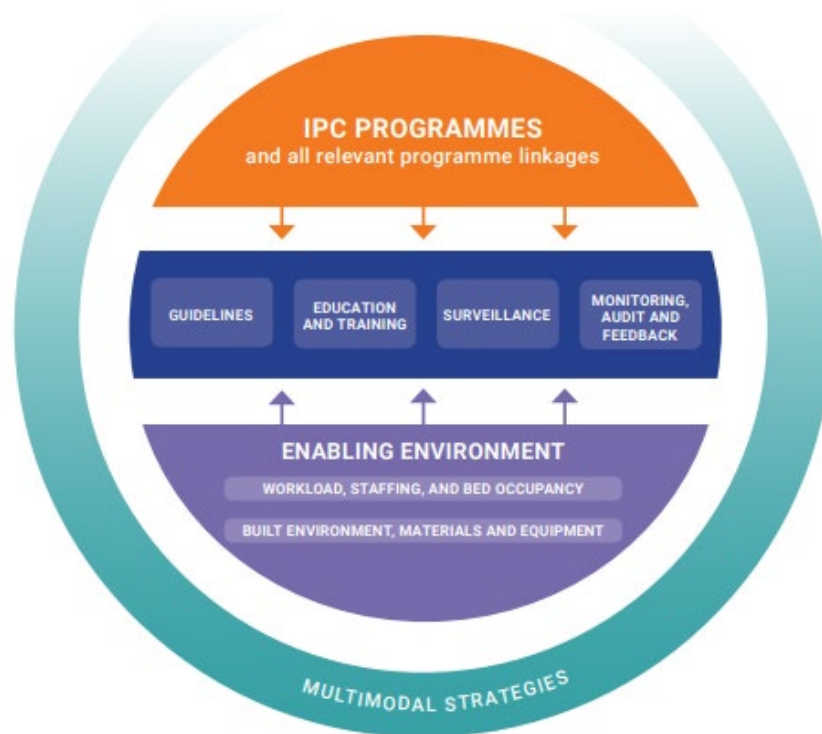
*The resources in this document are tools your facility can use as a guide to stay in line with state and national standards. This is an interim document, and we will update it with changes in national and state guidance and most recent evidence and data.*

# Infection Prevention and Control Program and Plan

Healthcare facilities should have a person dedicated to infection prevention and control and a plan to mitigate the risk of infection transmission. Some healthcare settings have specific regulatory requirements for infection prevention and control. Please refer to regulatory agencies (L&I, DSHS, HSQA, and CMS) for regulatory requirements.

At minimum, an infection prevention and control program should include:

- 1) Guidelines, policies, and procedures.
- 2) Education and training.
- 3) Surveillance.
- 4) Monitoring, auditing, and feedback.



From: [WHO's core components of infection prevention and control program](#)

# Elements of COVID-19 Prevention in All Healthcare Settings

## Screening

Follow [CDC recommendations](#) to ensure that everyone entering the facility is aware of infection prevention and control practices, including, but not limited to the following:

- Post visual alerts and signs at the entrance and strategic places. Include a publication or posting date to alert people that signs reflect current recommendations.
- Provide instructions when scheduling appointments.

Establish a process for everyone entering the facility. Regardless of vaccination status, people entering the facility should be screened and report any of the following:

- A positive viral test for SARS-CoV-2
- Symptoms of COVID-19
- Close contact with someone with SARS-CoV-2 infection (for patients and visitors)
- A higher-risk exposure (for HCP)
- HCP should report any of the criteria above to occupational health or the person the facility designated, so they can be managed properly. See [CDC's HCP Exposure and Exclusion from Work](#) and [CDC Mitigating Healthcare Worker Staffing Shortage](#) for guidance managing HCP with SARS-Cov-2 infection or exposure.
- Visitors with a positive viral test for SARS-CoV-2 or symptoms of COVID-19 should postpone non-urgent in-person visits until they meet the criteria for ending isolation in Section 2 of [CDC recommendations](#).
- Visitors who had close contact with someone with SARS-CoV-2 should postpone non-urgent, in-person visits until 10 days after their close contact if they meet any of the criteria in Section 2 of [CDC recommendations](#) (e.g., cannot wear source control).
- For additional information about visitation from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), see [Policy & Memos to States and Regions | CMS](#)

## Hand Hygiene

Follow [CDC recommendations for hand hygiene](#). HCP should use an alcohol-based hand rub containing at least 60% alcohol or wash with soap and water for the following clinical indications:

- Immediately before touching a patient.
- Before performing an aseptic task (for example, placing an indwelling device) or handling invasive medical devices.
- Before moving from work on a soiled body site to a clean body site on the same patient.
- After touching a patient or the patient's immediate environment.
- After contact with blood, body fluids, or contaminated surfaces.
- Immediately after glove removal.

**Handwashing with soap and water is most important after using the restroom and when hands are visibly soiled.** Most other times, an alcohol-based hand rub is preferred over soap and water due to evidence of better compliance compared to soap and water.

## Environmental Infection Control – Cleaning and Disinfection

Follow CDC recommendations for environmental cleaning and disinfection: [Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for HCP During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#) and [Guidelines for Environmental Infection Control in Health-Care Facilities](#).

- Dedicated medical equipment should be used when caring for a patient with suspected or confirmed SARS-CoV-2 infection.
- All non-dedicated, non-disposable medical equipment used for that patient should be cleaned and disinfected according to manufacturer's instructions and facility policies before use on another patient.
- Routine cleaning and disinfection procedures are appropriate for SARS-CoV-2 in healthcare settings, including areas where aerosol generating procedures (AGPs) are performed. *For example, using cleaners and water to pre-clean surfaces before applying an EPA-registered, hospital-grade disinfectant to frequently touched surfaces or objects for appropriate contact times as indicated on the product's label.*
- Refer to [List N](#) on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) website for EPA-registered disinfectants that kill SARS-CoV-2.
- Use routine procedures for laundry, food service utensils, and medical waste.

- After a patient with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 is discharged or transferred, HCP, including environmental services personnel (EVS), should refrain from entering the vacated room until sufficient time passes for enough air changes to remove potentially infectious particles. After that time passes, the room should undergo appropriate cleaning and surface disinfection before it is returned to routine use. See [CDC's clearance rates under differing ventilation conditions](#) including important footnotes.

## Ventilation

Ensure ventilation is working properly and make improvements as needed in patient rooms and all shared spaces. Reduce or eliminate exposures from infected individuals by using engineering controls. For example, use physical barriers at reception and triage locations, and dedicated pathways to guide symptomatic patients through waiting rooms and triage areas.

- See the following resources for guidance on ensuring that ventilation systems are operating properly:
  - [CDC's Guidelines for Environmental Infection Control in Health-Care Facilities](#)
  - [American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers \(ASHRAE\) resources for healthcare facilities, which also provides COVID-19 technical resources for healthcare facilities](#)
  - [CDC's Ventilation in Buildings, which includes options for non-clinical spaces in healthcare facilities](#)
- The WA DOH provides additional information on improving ventilation in:
  - [Ventilation and Air Quality for Reducing Transmission of Airborne Illnesses](#)
  - [Cooling indoor spaces without air conditioning \(wa.gov\)](#)



# Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Transmission-Based Precautions (TBP)

## This section:

- Provides tools to quickly determine appropriate PPE in different circumstances.
- These tools provide general references and do not cover all possible scenarios.  
**Use Table 1 below for guidance on how to use the PPE.**

HCP should adhere to Standard Precautions and follow PPE requirements according to Transmission-Based Precautions (TBP). When caring for patients with confirmed or suspected COVID-19, HCP must wear appropriate PPE including:

- [National Institute of Occupational Health and Safety \(NIOSH\) approved respirator](#)
- Gloves
- Gown
- Eye protection (for example, goggles or a face shield that covers the front and sides of the face and protects from splash and spray)

For more information about PPE use and source control, please refer to:

- [L&I Rules by Chapter \(wa.gov\)](#)
- [L&I Standards for Standard Precautions](#)
- [CDC Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for HCP During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
- [Conserving Supplies of Personal Protective Equipment in Healthcare Facilities during Shortages](#)
- [CDC Isolation Precautions](#)
- [WSHA's Isolation Precautions door signs](#)
- [How to Tell if your N95 Respirator is NIOSH Approved \(cdc.gov\)](#)

**Table 1:** HCP's How to Use PPE

	Source Control or Universal Use	COVID-19+ (single resident) or Quarantine	COVID-19+ unit/ Cohort	Other instructions
<b>N95 Respirator</b>	N95 voluntary. If used for universal <a href="#">source control</a> , and not PPE for TBP), may be worn until moist, soiled or damaged, then discard. Contact your supervisor for where to get more N95s.	Fit-tested N95 or higher respirator required.  Use one for one patient encounter, then discard.  Don new N95 for next patient. Discard N95 when soiled, wet, or damaged.	Fit-tested N95 or higher respirator required.  For multiple patients with the same COVID+ status, extend N95 use.  Discard after leaving the area or unit, when N95 becomes wet, soiled or damaged, and after leaving the space where <a href="#">any AGPs</a> are performed.	For disposable respirator, single use, then discard when N95 is required.  If used as source control only (not PPE), N95 fit test is not required.  <b>See note below for reusable respirators.</b>
<b>Facemask (Surgical mask)</b>	May be worn until moist, soiled, or damaged, then discard. Dispose of facemask when removed. Do not reuse.	Do not use surgical mask for COVID+ resident	Do not use surgical mask for COVID+ resident or <a href="#">AGPs</a> .	For patient care, single use, then discard.  Cloth masks are not surgical masks and should not be used by HCP at worksite.
<b>Eye Protection</b>	Extend use of eye protection:  <u>Disposable:</u> Wear during multiple resident encounters without removing it between residents. Remove it when leaving the care area. Discard.  <u>Reusable:</u> Same as disposable, but do not discard, instead disinfect** and store for next use.	<u>Disposable:</u> Single use, then discard.  <u>Reusable:</u> Use for one patient encounter, then disinfect.** Store for next use.	Throughout the unit, extend use of eye protection.  Use the same eye protection for multiple residents with the same COVID-19 status.  Doff and disinfect** reusable eye protection when leaving the area. Store reusable eye protection for next use.	Your facility provides the proper disinfectant for the organism.  Do not use damaged equipment.
<b>Gown</b>	No gowns needed for <a href="#">source control</a> .  Use according to standard and TBP.	Single use, one per patient, then discard (or launder if cloth).	Single use, one per resident, then discard (or launder if cloth).	Change gown when visibly soiled. Use according to standard and TBP.
<b>Gloves</b>	No gloves needed for <a href="#">source control</a> .  Use according to standard and TBP.	Single use, one pair per patient per care encounter or until contaminated.	Single use, one pair per resident per care encounter or until contaminated.	Single use, one pair per resident per care encounter or until contaminated.  Always discard when moving from 'dirty' tasks to 'clean' tasks, and after each resident encounter.

\*\*Put on clean gloves when disinfecting eye protection.

**Reusable respirators** (for example, elastomeric, powered air-purifying respirators, etc.): For COVID+ resident, quarantined resident,: A fit-tested elastomeric respirator is required. No fit-test needed for loose-fitting powered air-purifying respirator. Disinfect\*\* after each resident encounter, and when wet or soiled. Allow to dry, then store. Don again for next resident encounter requiring respirator use. If using elastomeric or powered air purifying respirators in clinical circumstances where a sterile field must be maintained, use respirators with no exhalation valve that filter the expired air, or otherwise adequately maintain [source control](#).

## Source Control

### This section:

- Provides guidance on when source control should be worn in healthcare settings and what is considered appropriate source control for HCP, patients, and visitors.
- Describes source control and the difference between source control and PPE, considering that some devices under certain circumstances may function as both.\*
- Provides guidance on how to improve the fit of source control in healthcare settings, which is different than community settings.

*\*Note: There is overlap of devices used for source control and PPE. Fitted respirators (such as N95s) and well-fitting medical facemasks when worn as PPE also act as source control. There are times in healthcare settings, however, when PPE is not indicated, and source control is still required.*

**The guidance in this section is not comprehensive with respect to PPE and should not be used to determine whether a device worn for source control meets or exceeds requirements for PPE.** For information on when PPE should be used refer to:

- [CDC Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for HCP During the COVID-19 Pandemic;](#)
- [L&I's Requirements and Guidance for Preventing COVID-19](#)
- [DOH's Donning and Doffing PPE.](#)

## Source Control Versus PPE

### Source control:

- Well-fitting cloth face coverings, facemasks, or respirators that cover a person's mouth and nose to prevent spread of potentially infectious respiratory secretions when they are breathing, talking, sneezing, or coughing.
- Some devices used for source control may not protect the wearer from infection with SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19). Source control should be used in addition to other options used to control the spread of SARS-Cov-2.
- Because of the potential for asymptomatic and pre-symptomatic transmission, source control measures are encouraged for everyone in a healthcare facility, even if they do not have symptoms of COVID-19.
- Healthcare facilities should follow the [CDC's Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for HCP During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#), in addition to any current [Washington DOH](#) or LHJ masking guidance and requirements.

## PPE

- Worn to reduce exposure to hazards that cause serious workplace injuries and illnesses, see the [Occupational Safety and Health Administration \(OSHA\) page on Personal Protective Equipment](#)
- A proper fit is important to improve the function of both source control and PPE. Transmission from asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic patients with SARS-CoV-2 infection can occur in healthcare settings.

## Aerosol-generating Procedures (AGP)

AGPs are procedures that might pose higher risk for transmission if the patient were to have COVID-19. They may include procedures that generate potentially infectious aerosols or involving anatomic regions where viral loads might be higher, such as the nose and throat, oropharynx, or respiratory tract.

Facilities should evaluate what procedures have the potential to generate aerosols. They should include those procedures in their respiratory protection plan and facility risk assessment. For more information see:

- [CDC: Implementing universal use of PPE for HCP](#)
- [CDC: SARS-CoV-2 Infection prevention strategies during AGP](#)
- [CDC: Which procedures are considered AGP in healthcare?](#)
- [L&I Chapter 296-841, WAC, Airborne Contaminants](#)

Note: It hasn't been possible to develop a comprehensive list of AGPs for healthcare settings due to limited data on which procedures may produce potentially infectious aerosols, and whether reported transmissions during AGPs are due to aerosols or other exposures.

## Patient Isolation and Quarantine

Follow [CDC recommendations for Transmission Based Precautions \(TBP\) including quarantine and isolation.](#)

**Patients with an exposure to SARS-CoV-2 need to be placed in TBP for quarantine if they meet one of the following criteria:**

- Patient is unable to be tested or wear source control as recommended for the 10 days following their exposure
- Patient is moderately to severely immunocompromised
- Patient resides on a unit with others who are moderately to severely immunocompromised
- Patient resides on a unit experiencing ongoing SARS-CoV-2 transmission that is not controlled with initial interventions

Guidelines for managing patients with suspected or confirmed SARS-CoV-2:

- Communicate information about patients with suspected or confirmed SARS-CoV-2 infection to appropriate personnel before transferring them to other departments in the facility (for example, radiology) and to other healthcare facilities
- Place a patient with suspected or confirmed SARS-CoV-2 infection in a single-person room. The door should be kept closed (if safe to do so). The patient should have a dedicated bathroom
- Limit transport and movement of the patient outside of the room to medically essential purposes

Implement **Cohorting**:

- Cohorting is an infection prevention and control measure that groups together patients with the same infectious condition and no other infection
- It limits the risk of spreading COVID-19 by using dedicated staff to care for only COVID-19 positive patients
- It allows for conservation of PPE resources and extended use of PPE such as respirators, face masks and eye protection when supplies are limited
- While intended for long-term care facilities, healthcare personnel can adapt strategies for cohorting in many in-patient healthcare settings

### **Asymptomatic Patients with Exposure to SARS-CoV-2**

Asymptomatic patients with an exposure to SARS-CoV-2 generally do not require TBP. Exposed patients should wear source control for 10 days post-exposure.

If a patient has not recovered from a SARS-Cov-2 infection in the last 30 days, they should be tested immediately on post exposure day 1 (but not before 24 hours from exposure) day 3 and day 5.

## **Isolation Versus Quarantine**

**QUARANTINE:** TBP used to keep someone who might have been exposed to COVID-19 away from all others to prevent potential transmission of COVID-19.

**ISOLATION:** TBP used to keep someone who has confirmed COVID-19, away from others to prevent transmission to others.

**Table 2:** Summary of SARS-CoV-2 Isolation and Quarantine

	Quarantine	Isolation
<b>Days</b>	<p>For a patient that meets the criteria for quarantine, quarantine ends after <u>one</u> of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 day quarantine</li> </ul> <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7-day quarantine with negative tests on day 1, 3 and 5.</li> </ul>	<p>Isolation ends for patients who are not severely immunocompromised when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.</li> </ul> <p><b>AND</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 24 hours have passed since last fever without the use of fever-reducing medications.</li> </ul> <p><b>AND</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Symptoms (for example cough, shortness of breath) have improved.</li> </ul>
<b>Reason for TBP</b>	<p>The incubation period for COVID-19 is thought to extend to 14 days, with a median of 4–5 days from exposure to symptom onset. Most people with COVID-19 who have symptoms will do so within about 11 days of SARS-CoV-2 infection.</p> <p>If exposed to COVID-19, perform <a href="#">post-exposure testing</a>.</p>	<p>It takes about 10 days for someone to stop being infectious after they become ill with COVID-19, which is why it is recommended that someone who tests positive for COVID-19 isolates for 10 days.</p>

## Considerations for Healthcare Personnel

### **Mitigating Healthcare Worker Staffing Shortage**

**Maintaining appropriate staffing in healthcare facilities is essential to providing a safe work environment for HCP and safe patient care.** In times of COVID-19 surge, healthcare facilities may experience HCP shortages due to employee illness, exclusion from work due to higher-risk exposure, the need to care for ill family members, fear of illness, and burnout.

This guidance is for COVID-19 contingency capacity staffing and crisis capacity staffing strategies,\* which are defined as:

**Contingency Capacity Staffing:** Healthcare facilities and employers should work with human resources and occupational health services to carry out contingency capacity strategies that plan and prepare for staffing shortages.

**Crisis Capacity Staffing:** When staffing shortages occur, healthcare facilities and employers should work with human resources and occupational health services to carry out crisis capacity staffing strategies that ensure safe patient care.

*\*Note: These strategies are independent of “contingency standards of care” and “crisis standards of care” based on the framework the National Academies of Medicine developed. Unlike implementation of crisis standards of care, which in Washington requires a formal statewide declaration, healthcare facilities and employers may choose to implement contingency capacity staffing and crisis capacity staffing independently.*

The following are considerations for managing healthcare personnel in your facility with infection or exposure to SARS-CoV-2:

### **Staffing shortages**

CDC’s Strategies to Mitigate HCP Staffing Shortages offers a continuum of options for addressing staffing shortages. Contingency and then crisis capacity staffing strategies supplement conventional strategies. Contingency strategies should be used before crisis strategies. Facilities experiencing staffing shortages should reach out to their local health jurisdiction, local emergency management and regional health care coalition.

- [CDC Strategies to Mitigate Healthcare Personnel Staffing Shortages.](#)
- [Interim Guidance for Managing Healthcare Personnel with SARS-CoV-2 Infection or Exposure to SARS-CoV-2](#)
- [DOH Standards of Care](#)
- [WA State Regional healthcare Coalition.](#)

### **High-Risk Exposures and Isolation:**

- [CDC Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for HCP During the COVID-19 Pandemic.](#)
- [L&I Requirements and Guidance for Preventing COVID-19](#)

## **Testing**

A robust testing program can identify cases earlier, allowing early isolation, identification of people exposed and early source control interventions when indicated.

- HCP and patients should be tested immediately if symptomatic, regardless of vaccination status.
- Skilled nursing facilities should also consider testing upon admission if an individual is at risk for COVID-19.
- Pre-procedure or other pre-admission viral testing is at the discretion of the facility.

*Note: The yield of this testing for identifying asymptomatic infection is likely low when performed on vaccinated individuals. However, these results might continue to be useful in some situations:*

- *When performing higher risk procedures or for HCP caring for patients who are moderately to severely immunocompromised*
  - *To inform the type of infection control precautions used (for example, room assignment, cohorting, or PPE) and*
  - *To prevent unprotected exposures.*
- Expanded screening testing of asymptomatic HCP without known exposures is at the discretion of the facility.
  - Follow [CDC viral testing guidance](#) if implementing a screening process.
  - For testing HCP to return to work following SARS-CoV-2 infection or exposure, see CDC recommendations in [Strategies to Mitigate Healthcare Personnel Staffing Shortages](#).

## Considerations for Immunocompromised People

People who are immunocompromised have an increased and varying susceptibility to severe COVID-19 disease.

Immunocompromising conditions can include, but are not limited to:

- Active cancer treatment
- Hematologic malignancy
- Recipients of solid organ transplants
- Advanced or untreated HIV infection
- Prolonged use of drugs that suppress the immune system
- People born with immunodeficiencies



Individuals with an increased risk for severe disease or who have someone in their household with an increased risk, should consider wearing well-fitting masks or respirators even if source control is not required by a facility.

CDC and NIH also provide additional prevention recommendations, including vaccination and prophylaxis strategies, in the following resources.

- [National Cancer Institute COVID-19: What People with Cancer Should Know](#)
- [COVID-19 Real-Time Learning Network: Immunocompromised Populations](#)
- [CDC COVID-19 Vaccination guidance for people who are moderately or severely immunocompromised](#)
- [CDC Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for HCP During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
- [Basic Infection Control And Prevention Plan for Outpatient Settings-2011 \(cdc.gov\)](#)
- [COVID-19 Related Infection Prevention for the Immunocompromised Host - ISID](#)
- [Information for Persons Who Are Immunocompromised Regarding Prevention and Treatment of SARS-CoV-2 Infection in the Context of Currently Circulating Omicron Sublineages – United States, January 2023 | MMWR \(cdc.gov\)](#)
- [NIH: Special Considerations in People Who are Immunocompromised](#)

## Setting Specific Checklists

### Long Term Care Facilities

**Residents and staff of LTCFs are disproportionately affected by COVID-19, with more outbreaks, cases, and deaths compared to acute care facilities.**

#### ***What to do if you identify a COVID-19 case in your Long-term Care Facility:***

This checklist provides a framework for responding to COVID-19 in a LTCF and may be used to guide response actions. Consult with your [local health jurisdiction \(LHJ\)](#) when managing outbreaks.

#### **Contain and Prepare**

- COVID-19 positive resident:** Place in aerosol contact precautions and post [precautions sign](#) on door.
- COVID-19 positive HCP:** Exclude from work (see CDC [Return to Work Criteria](#)). Notify LHJ and follow LHJ direction.

LHJ Contact \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

- Consider opening a COVID-19 unit and quarantine unit (if not already open):
- If possible, dedicate separate staff (staff that do not care for residents outside of the COVID-19 unit during their shift) to care of residents with COVID-19.
- Refer to CDC guidance for mitigating staffing shortages and PPE optimizing strategies if needed. Contact LHJ if experiencing PPE shortages.
- Ensure adequate specimen collection supplies for point-of-care or laboratory nucleic acid amplification test (NAAT)/polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests. Identify where you can get additional supplies.
- Implement universal source control on the unit or area experiencing the outbreak until no new cases are identified for 14 days.
- Consider placing a hold on admissions to the facility until you can clarify the extent of transmission and implement interventions. Follow guidance from your LHJ.
- Limit outside-contracted staff entering the building to acutely necessary medical treatments and therapies, and critical building and infrastructure maintenance or repair.
- [Notify all HCP, residents, and families of the outbreak.](#) Reinforce basic infection control practices.

### **Identify Additional Cases**

- Prepare to conduct unit-wide testing.
- Identify staff who can assist with specimen collection.
- Designate a point person to receive and track results.
- Obtain orders for testing from a licensed provider (DOH, LHJ or Other)
- With assistance from your LHJ, begin [unit-wide testing](#) including all residents and staff present in the facility two days prior to onset of the identified case.
- Aim for the shortest turnaround time for tests as possible, ideally within 2 days.
- If using point-of-care antigen tests, refer to [Guidance for Healthcare Workers about COVID-19 \(SARS-CoV-2\) Testing](#)
- Report all positive cases to your LHJ.
- Continue testing all residents and staff on affected unit who previously tested negative every 3–7 days for a minimum of 14 days from most recent positive result, or according to LHJ direction.

### **Identify Potential Exposures**

- With assistance from your LHJ, identify HCP, residents, and visitors who may have been exposed to COVID-19. Place any resident identified as potentially exposed in quarantine, if they meet criteria per [CDC's Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for HCP During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#).
- If possible, place them in private rooms.
- If private rooms are unavailable, avoid placing residents with high probability of exposure with residents at high risk for severe disease).
- HCP with [higher-risk exposures](#) who are asymptomatic generally do not need to be restricted from work following their exposure unless they meet criteria described in CDC [guidance](#). It includes working on a unit that is experiencing ongoing SARS-Cov-2 transmission that is not controlled with initial interventions.

### Managing Additional Cases

- Place all residents who test positive in the COVID-19 unit. Provide care using dedicated staff using [aerosol contact precautions](#).
- Exclude all staff from work who test positive according to [CDC guidance](#).
- Maintain adherence to cohorting [guidelines](#), testing frequency, and proper PPE use to minimize your outbreak.

### Returning to Normal Operations

- Follow the [CDC's time and symptom-based strategy](#) for returning recovered residents to the general unit. Note that immunocompromised residents may require a prolonged recovery time.
- Work with your LHJ on resuming normal operations in line with state and national guidance.

## Considerations for Memory Care

**This section contains suggested best practices based on memory care facility experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic.**

*Note: Some suggested practices may not be regulatory requirements. For questions about regulatory requirements, contact your [DSHS Field Manager](#). To find your field member on the Residential Care Services Offices [webpage](#), click on HQ or region 1,2,3. Some recommendations may not apply to all circumstances or all facility types. Please contact your [LHJ](#) if you have questions about implementing any of these recommendations.*

**Memory care poses unique challenges for infection-prevention best practices for the following reasons:**

- Residents in memory care may have difficulty understanding or remembering the need to wear masks and follow other infection prevention protocols.
- Residents in memory care may gather closely, touch surfaces, staff, and/or each

other frequently. They may become distressed with changes in routine made in response to COVID-19, such as fewer visits, relocation within the facility or unit, change in schedule, and cancellation of group activities.

### **Proactive Cohorting**

- Separate buildings or cottages can be used to house residents with confirmed or suspected COVID-19. If separate buildings are not available, separate wings or hallways could be used.
- If possible, consider keeping a set of adjacent rooms open for immediate quarantine and isolation if an exposure or new case occurs.
- In consultation with DSHS, fire safety officials, and your LHJ, consider closing fire doors to create physically separate spaces for units.

### **Outbreak Mitigation**

- Encourage and remind residents to wear source control if tolerated.
- Consider introducing activities or using TVs and other distractions away from the boundaries between units to discourage residents from attempting to leave their unit.
- Increase staffing during outbreak periods to have extra help monitoring residents and keeping them in their designated units.
- Consider using agency staff if necessary.
- Consider using sitters to help keep residents calm and comfortable in their unit.
- If not in a designated memory care unit, consider placing [quarantined or isolated](#) residents who wander in rooms or areas that minimize contact with negative residents. Ensure staff wear fit-tested N95 respirators in quarantined areas or where isolated residents may wander. When moving residents, bring personal comfort items to help them acclimate to new rooms.

### **Symptoms in Memory Care Residents**

COVID-19 may present differently among those with dementia due to their inability to describe symptoms. Follow [CDC guidelines](#) for frequency of evaluating residents for COVID-19.

Common symptoms in the dementia population may include:

#### ***Changes in behavior***

- Increased agitation
- Increased confusion
- Refusal to eat
- Unexplained falls
- Sudden sadness

#### ***Physical Symptoms***

- Coughing
- Difficulty breathing

- Fever
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell

## **PPE Considerations**

**PPE Guidance is the same for memory care units as it is for other healthcare facility types.**

The following list addresses special considerations for use of PPE in Memory Care:

- If residents are having difficulty understanding information related to PPE, staff may consider other PPE options that meet the same level of protection. For example, goggles instead of face shields, and/or transparent masks approved for use in healthcare settings.
- Use of gowns and gloves in common spaces when PPE is not indicated may increase the risk of transmission among residents and staff. If direct resident care needs to occur outside of a room for a COVID positive/suspected resident, don and doff PPE and perform hand hygiene after care.
- Loose gowns may drape over and touch contaminated surfaces.
- Constant use of PPE can give staff a false sense of security leading to less frequent hand hygiene.
- Isolation carts that contain transmission-based precautions should be placed outside the door of a resident in quarantine or isolation.

**To deter residents from touching and contaminating PPE in the cart, consider using:**

- A piece of furniture that matches facility décor
- Carts that can be secured. Locks are not recommended as PPE should be easily accessible for staff to don at the door
- Trash bins with lids to reduce resident interest in waste in the bin
- If you determine resident-accessible hand sanitizer stations are a hazard in your facility, consider giving HCP individual hand sanitizers to keep on their person.

## **Hospitals**

### ***What to do if you identify a COVID-19 case in your hospital***

This checklist provides a suggested framework for responding to COVID-19 in a hospital and may be used to guide response actions. Consult with your LHJ when managing

outbreaks in healthcare settings.

### Contain and prepare

- COVID-19 positive patient:** Use [appropriate precautions](#) in a negative airflow room, if available. We encourage hospitals to use WSHA's [precautions sign](#).
- COVID-19 positive HCP:** Exclude from work if the newly identified case is a HCP (see CDC [Return to Work Criteria](#)). Notify and follow LHJ directions.

LHJ Contact \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

- Prepare to open your COVID-19 unit (if unable to isolate or have dedicated COVID-19 staff spaces on a regular unit):
- Ensure adequate staffing to dedicate to care of COVID-19 patients.
- Prepare for potential staff shortages and identify resources for additional staff. Refer to [CDC guidance for mitigating healthcare personnel staffing shortages](#)
- Ensure adequate PPE, identifying resources if additional PPE is needed. Refer to [CDC NIOSH Conserving PPE in Health Care Facilities During Shortages](#) if needed.
- Implement universal source control on the unit or area experiencing outbreak until no new cases are identified for 14 days.
- Ensure adequate specimen collection supplies and identify where additional supplies may be obtained.
- Consider limiting visitation on the unit where a positive case is identified.
- Notify family or designated power of attorney as appropriate.

### Identify potential exposures and additional cases

- In coordination with your LHJ, and following [CDC guidance for Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for HCP During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#), begin expanded testing of identified possible exposures. This could be a staff department such as IT, a specific hallway where a positive patient resides, or an entire unit.
- Exposed patients generally do not require quarantine. If a patient requires quarantine per CDC's [Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for HCP During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#), use the same precautions used for patients who have COVID-19. Patients in quarantine and patients known to have COVID-19 should not be roomed together.
- Exposed HCP with [higher-risk exposures](#) who are asymptomatic generally do not need to be restricted from work for 10 days or 7 days with a negative test following their exposure.
- Place any potentially exposed patient that requires quarantine in a private room, if

possible.

- If private rooms are unavailable, consider the probability of exposure and risk to the roommate. For example, avoid placing patients with high probability of exposure with patients at high risk for severe disease.
- Aim for the shortest turnaround time for tests as possible.
- Report all results to the hospital infection prevention/control and to the LHJ.
- Complete [post-exposure testing](#) for those with identified exposures.

### **Managing additional cases**

- Place all patients who test positive in the COVID-19 unit (or isolation room on regular unit) and care for using dedicated staff (staff cares for only COVID-19 positive patients or only general patients during their shift).
- Exclude from work all staff who test positive according to [CDC's Return to Work](#).
- Maintain strict adherence to cohorting guidelines, frequent testing, and proper PPE use to minimize your outbreak.
- Refer to [CDC guidance for mitigating Healthcare Personnel Staffing Shortages](#) if needed.
- Refer to CDC's [CDC NIOSH Conserving PPE in Health Care Facilities During Shortages](#) if needed.

### **Returning to normal operations**

- Follow [CDC e Duration of Transmission-Based Precautions for Patients with SARS-CoV-2 Infection](#) for returning recovered patients to the general unit. Note that immunocompromised patients may require a prolonged recovery time.
- Work with your LHJ on resuming normal operations in line with state and national guidance.

## **Other Setting Specific Resources**

### **Considerations for Assisted Living, Group Homes, and Other Residential Care Facilities**

- [CDC's Infection Prevention and Control recommendations](#)
- [DOH Respiratory Illness Dashboard](#)

- [DOH What to do When you are Sick with COVID-19 or Other Respiratory Virus](#)
- [Communal Setting Guidance: How to Protect Yourself and Others](#)
- CDC's [Respiratory Virus Guidance](#)

NOTE: Healthcare services delivered in these settings should be informed by [CDC's Infection Prevention and Control recommendations](#).

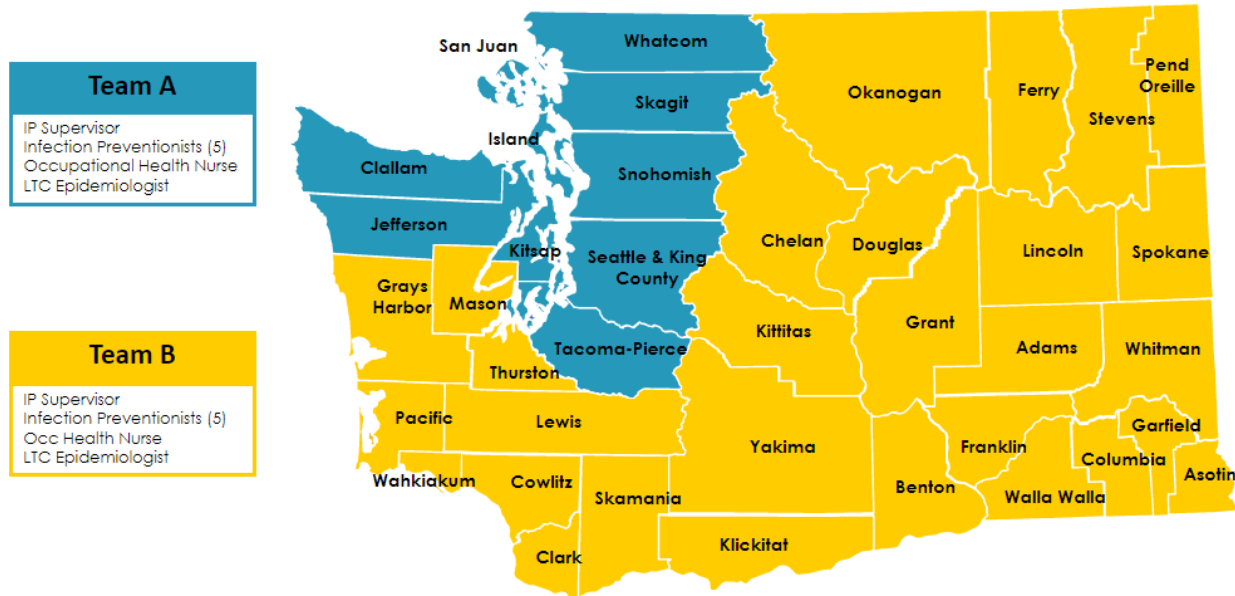


# Additional Resources

## Healthcare Associated Infections and Antimicrobial Resistance Contact Information

Email	Description	Monitored By
<a href="mailto:HAI@doh.wa.gov">HAI@doh.wa.gov</a>	General healthcare associated infection questions	HAI&AR Team
<a href="mailto:HAI-EpiOutbreakTeam@doh.wa.gov">HAI-EpiOutbreakTeam@doh.wa.gov</a>	Epidemiological outbreak assistance and healthcare associated infection questions	Epidemiology Team
<a href="mailto:HAI-FieldTeam@doh.wa.gov">HAI-FieldTeam@doh.wa.gov</a>	Schedule an ICAR for your facility	ICAR Coordinators
<a href="mailto:HAI-FITTest@doh.wa.gov">HAI-FITTest@doh.wa.gov</a>	Schedule a respirator (N95) Fit test or training for your facility	Occupational Health Team
<a href="mailto:MDRO-AR@doh.wa.gov">MDRO-AR@doh.wa.gov</a>	Multidrug-resistant organisms (MDRO) coordination and guidance	MDRO Team
<a href="mailto:ProjectFirstline@doh.wa.gov">ProjectFirstline@doh.wa.gov</a>	HAI training program for frontline healthcare workers	Strategic Partners Team

## Jurisdiction Map



## Webinars and Information Sessions

- **SNF IP Chat** – A bi-monthly webinar series supporting Skilled Nursing Facility Infection Preventionists to share challenges, solutions, and best practices. The series occurs on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday every month. To register, please [click here](#). For more information, please contact [MDRO-AR@doh.wa.gov](mailto:MDRO-AR@doh.wa.gov).
- **Critical Access Hospital (CAH) Coffee Hour** – A monthly networking opportunity for Critical Access Hospital Infection Preventionists to form connections, seek advice, and discuss current topics in a supportive, non-regulatory platform. To join, please contact [HAI-COVID@doh.wa.gov](mailto:HAI-COVID@doh.wa.gov).
- **DOH HAI/AR Newsletter** – To subscribe to our monthly newsletter, please visit the Department of Health's [here](#).

## Additional Resource Links

## Infection Control and Response (ICAR)

- [Infection Control and Response \(ICAR\) Program | HAI-AR | WA DOH](#)
- [Infection Control Assessment Tools | HAI | CDC](#)

## Multi Drug Resistant Organisms (MDRO)

- [Interim Guidance for a Public Health Response to Contain Novel or Targeted Multidrug-resistant Organisms \(MDROs\): Updated December 2022 \(cdc.gov\)](#)
- [MDRO Management | Guidelines Library | Infection Control | CDC](#)
- [CDC's Core Infection Prevention and Control Practices for Safe Healthcare Delivery in All Settings | Infection Control | CDC](#)

## Signage and Video Demonstrations

- [Aerosol Contact Precautions Signage | Washington State Hospital Association \(WSHA\)](#)
- [Videos About Infection Control | Project Firstline | CDC](#)

## Isolation Precautions

- [Guideline for Isolation Precautions: Preventing Transmission of Infectious Agents in Healthcare Settings \(2007\) \(cdc.gov\) \(updated May 2022\)](#)
- [Isolation Precautions | Guidelines Library | Infection Control | CDC](#)
- [Precautions | Appendix A | Isolation Precautions | Guidelines Library | Infection Control | CDC](#)
- [Transmission Precautions | Appendix A | Isolation Precautions | Guidelines Library | Infection Control | CDC](#)

## Disinfection and Environmental Cleaning

- [Guideline for Disinfection and Sterilization in Healthcare Facilities, 2008 \(cdc.gov\) \(updated May 2019\)](#)
- [Guidelines for Environmental Infection Control in Health-Care Facilities \(cdc.gov\)](#)
- [CDC Best Practices for Environmental Cleaning in Resource-Limited Healthcare Facilities](#)
- [List N Tool: COVID-19 Disinfectants | US EPA](#)

## Immunizations

- [COVID-19 Vaccines for Long-term Care Residents | CDC](#)
- [Resources for Long-Term Care Facilities | Washington State Department of Health](#)
- [Long-Term Care COVID-19 Immunization Champion Award | Washington State Department of Health](#)
- [Interim Clinical Considerations for Use of COVID-19 Vaccines | CDC](#)
- Subscribe to [Immunization Training for Washington State Department of Health](#)
- Subscribe to [WA DOH Updates on Long Term Care and Adult Immunizations](#)

## Injection Safety

- [Infection Prevention during Blood Glucose Monitoring and Insulin Administration | Injection Safety | CDC](#)
- [Injection Safety | CDC](#)

## Fit Testing

- DOH [Fit Testing Webpage](#)
- To schedule facility fit testing for your facility, or to speak with an occupational health nurse, please contact: [HAI-FitTest@doh.wa.gov](mailto:HAI-FitTest@doh.wa.gov)

## Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- [Respirator Donning and Doffing Instructions | The University of Texas Medical Branch](#)

## COVID Data Tracker

- [COVID-19 Vaccinations by County](#)

## Ventilation

- [DOH Ventilation and Air Quality resource](#)

## Laboratory Testing and Cohorting

- [Testing and Management for Nursing Home Residents with Acute Respiratory Illness Symptoms when SARS-CoV2 and Influenza Viruses are Co-Circulating | CDC](#)

## Other

- DSHS Dear Provider Letter: Sign up [here](#)
- Medical Test Site Waiver (MTSW)/ Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA): If you plan to do influenza or RSV antigen testing, you can add these tests to your waiver using this [Waiver Change Form](#).

