

# Guidance for Caring for People in Their Homes

## FOR NON-MEDICAL VISITS

This information is for community organizations, families, interpreters, and faith communities for whom home visiting has been an essential way to deliver services. Due to the highly contagious nature of COVID-19 and the potential for serious health complications or death from the virus, use the following guidelines when caring for someone in their home.

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### Consider whether a home visit is the best option

- If you have any cold or flu-like symptoms (cough, fever, difficulty breathing, chills, headache, muscle pain, sore throat, and/or loss of taste or smell) do **not** visit anyone's home.
- If you are over 65 and/or have health conditions like asthma, diabetes, or high blood pressure, you are at higher risk and should find someone else to provide home visiting services.
- Many agencies are limiting in-person visits. If you work with an agency or organization, check to see if there are restrictions or protocols in place during this time. Executive Order requires face coverings for workers. See [When and how to wear a mask \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/prevention.html#masks\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/prevention.html#masks).
- Keep in mind that even if you and the person you are visiting do not have any symptoms, you may still be exposing each other to the virus.

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### Alternatives to home visiting

Before visiting someone in person, think of whether there are other ways to help them, or ask others (such as health care workers or colleagues) for ideas.

- Send a personal message or card through the mail.
- Make a phone call, send texts, or email.
- Use FaceTime or other video call options.
- Drop off supplies at the door without direct contact. Keep at least 6 feet of distance at all times if you do interact. If the home visit offers physical or spiritual services, try to think of creative, thoughtful, and effective options to keep physical distance while supporting the person in need.

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### If you decide to make a home visit

Before you visit: Find out if the person or anyone in the home is experiencing flu-like symptoms. If the answer is "yes," re-evaluate whether you should continue the visit. If you choose to visit, follow Centers

for Disease Control and Prevention practical guidance for caregivers: [If You Are Sick Or Caring For Someone \(cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/index.html\)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/index.html).

- The CDC advises the use of simple cloth face coverings to help prevent people who may have the virus and do not know it from transmitting it to others. Visit [CDC's About Cloth Face Coverings \(cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html\)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html) to learn more.
- Limit what part of the home you are in. For example, stay in the room closest to the door instead of moving to other rooms if possible.
- Limit the number of people in the space, and keep a distance of at least 6 feet between you and others.
- Keep the visit as brief as possible.
- If you are visiting someone who is in bed, stand at the foot of the bed rather than the head. This will give you a natural distancing of about 6 feet while being able to connect directly through eye contact.
- Wash your hands frequently during the visit and as soon as you leave.
  - Take hand sanitizer with you in case hand washing is not an option.
- Always cover your coughs and sneezes, and ask others to do the same. Take tissues with you. If you use a tissue, throw it away right after use and then wash or sanitize your hands.
- Avoid touching things in the home and do not touch your eyes, nose, mouth, or face during your home visiting time.
- If you need to share something that the recipient must take by mouth, for medical or religious purposes, pass the solid or liquid item in a container instead of putting it directly into the hand or mouth of the recipient. Be sure to sanitize or dispose of the container after each use.

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## Learn more

Get the most current and reliable information on COVID-19 from these websites:

- [MDH Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/index.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/index.html)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) \(www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html\)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html)

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## Minnesota Helpline

651-297-1304 or 1-800-657-3504

Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.



Minnesota Department of Health | [health.mn.gov](https://health.mn.gov) | 651-201-5000  
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Contact [health.communications@state.mn.us](mailto:health.communications@state.mn.us) to request an alternate format.

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