

Shelter Health Guidance for COVID-19 and Influenza:

3/5/2020

The following are Alameda County Health Care for the Homeless guidance and recommendations for service agencies providing care for people experiencing homelessness regarding the COVID-19 Virus.

1. [Plan and be aware of guidance and resources](#)
2. [Provide education for staff and residents](#)
3. [Provide hygiene and prevention materials](#)
4. [Screen residents and clients for symptoms](#)
5. [Isolate symptomatic persons from the general population as much as possible](#)
6. [Provide care for symptomatic persons, contact health providers for testing or treatment](#)
7. [Provide shelter and program sanitation services](#)

1. Plan and be aware of COVID-19 guidance and resources

- a. Alameda County Public Health updates and guidance at:
<http://www.acphd.org/2019-ncov.aspx>
- b. Alameda County Health Care for the Homeless guidance and resources at
<https://www.achch.org/coronavirus>
- c. Review HUD's 2020 infectious Disease Toolkit for CoC's
<https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/5985/infectious-disease-toolkit-for-cocs/>

2. Provide Education for staff and residents

- a. Post flyers and have credible educational information clearly visible and available to staff and clients.
 - i. ACHCH recommends at least the following posters/resources:
 1. Symptoms of COVID-19 ([pdf](#), [espanol](#))
 2. Cover Your Cough ([pdf](#) [espanol](#))
 3. Wash Your Hands (english and espanol) ([pdf](#))
 4. Stop the Spread of Germs ([pdf](#), [espanol](#))
 5. What You Should Know About Coronavirus (Flyer)
 - ii. Train staff on handwashing, cough, and other hygiene techniques. Train staff on procedures around disease identification and control.
 - iii. Ensure that staff that are sick do not come to work.
 - iv. Maintain program point persons in contact with the ACHCH program or Public Health department.

This guidance is based on the best available information as of 3/5/20, and will be updated as warranted and as we learn more about COVID-19

3. Provide hygiene and prevention materials

- a. Give all residents easy access to soap, water and hand-drying resources.
 - Make hand sanitizer available for general use, and offer personal-sized hand sanitizer for clients to take.
- b. Encourage the use of and distribute *disposable face masks* to any person with a cough or other symptoms:

Information on Face Masks and Respirators

There are key differences between face masks and respirators:

Face mask	Respirator
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “surgical mask, disposable mask, medical mask”• Looser fitting• Keeps virus from getting OUT of a sick person• Also can protect from splashes/drops coming from a sick person• Good for any sick/symptomatic person to wear	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “N95 air filter”• Must be tightly fitted, filters air coming IN• Hard to breathe through if you are sick, young or old.• Not recommended for general use during viral pandemic.• Health workers use when directly treating infected patients

- If someone has a cough or is sneezing, please have them wear a disposable face mask when they are within six feet of other people.
- Change the mask if it gets saturated.
- Wash hands before and after changing mask to prevent spread of germs.

4. Screen residents and clients for symptoms

- a. Provide Health Screening at intake and on a daily basis:

Screening questions: Are you currently experiencing any of the following:

- Fever (temperature over 101 degrees)
- Cough
- Shortness of breath, respiratory difficulties

ACHCH Recommends: *Staff should have a temporal thermometer to help screen residents and clients for fever.*

5. Contact health providers for testing or treatment of symptomatic persons

- a. If a person develops symptoms of COVID-19 including fever, cough or shortness of breath, *and has reason to believe they may have been exposed*, they should call their health care provider or local health department before seeking care, unless they are in a medical emergency. Contacting them in advance will make sure that people can get the care they need without putting others at risk.
 - i. [See this list](#) for countywide health center phone contacts
 - ii. Alameda County Public Health Department info calls: 510 268 2101

- iii. City of Berkeley health department: 510-981-5300
- b. Ensure that all clients have access to a [primary care provider](#).

6. Provide care for symptomatic persons

- a. Identify spaces for symptomatic persons: Designate a space for people who may become sick. If possible, designate a nearby separate bathroom just for sick people. Develop a plan for cleaning the room daily.
- b. **What to do if a Client has Flu Symptoms**
 - i. Gather information from the client. Help the client sort through how they are feeling to see if they are mildly ill or in need of medical evaluation. Clients should not be told to seek medical care if they are not ill or have mild symptoms for which they would not ordinarily seek medical care.
 - ii. Ask what symptoms they are having.
 - iii. Have client gauge the severity of symptoms by using a 1-10 scale, with 10 being worse.
 - iv. If you can take their temperature, do so. An oral temperature reading of 101 F constitutes a fever. If they complain of sweats or chills, they probably have a fever.
 - v. **Refer client to their [primary care provider](#) via telephone for evaluation.**
 - vi. Mild symptoms without fever without complaint of feeling very sick and without complaint or evidence of extreme fatigue probably do not represent flu symptoms.
- c. **Mild and moderately ill clients should stay in one spot as much as possible. Please do your best to accommodate your clients' needs at your site.**
 - i. Try to situate them in a comfortable place at as much distance from the rest of the site's population as possible. Encourage the client to lie down and rest. Most will want to do this.
 - ii. Prevent dehydration. Encourage client to drink plenty of water, clear soup, decaffeinated tea, juice.
 - iii. Provide a blanket if possible.
 - iv. Provide client with hand sanitizer, tissues and plastic bag or lined garbage bag to dispose of tissues.
 - v. Encourage client to cough into their elbow area or cover their mouth with tissues or paper towels when they cough or sneeze.
 - vi. Provide client with face mask.
 - vii. Bring food to the client as much as possible to avoid contact with other persons.
 - viii. Check in on client several times a day.
 - ix. Reduce number of people the client interacts with as much as possible until 24 after the fever is gone.

7. Isolate symptomatic persons from the general population as much as possible

- a. **Isolation Recommendations**

- i. Have the sick person isolated in a room alone. If individual rooms for the sick persons are not available, please follow the guidelines below
- ii. House sick persons in a large, well ventilated room with the fewest number of other residents.
- iii. Avoid housing the sick person in a room with people who have health conditions that increase their risk of complications from COVID-19, these include but not limited to HIV, asthma, diabetes and pregnancy.
- iv. Increase spacing between beds so that the sick person's bed is six feet from the next bed.
- v. Arrange beds so that persons lie head-to-toe or toe-to-toe to provide the greatest distance between faces.
- vi. Use sheets or curtains to create temporary barriers between beds.
- vii. Increase frequency of cleaning and disinfecting the area.
- viii. Make sure soap and running water or alcohol-based hand sanitizers are available for hand hygiene. Give directions on hand hygiene and cough etiquette.

8. Shelter and program sanitation recommendations:

a. Cleaning and Disinfecting Shelters and Programs

- High touch areas likely to be contaminated should be cleaned and disinfected at least daily.
- Always follow label directions on cleaning products and disinfectants. Wash surfaces with a general household cleaner to remove germs. Rinse with water, and follow with an EPA-registered disinfectant to kill germs. Read the label to make sure it states that EPA has approved the product for effectiveness against influenza A virus.
- If a surface is not visibly dirty, you can clean it with an EPA-registered product that both cleans (removes germs) and disinfects (kills germs) instead. Be sure to read the label directions carefully, as there may be a separate procedure for using the product as a cleaner or as a disinfectant. Disinfection usually requires the product to remain on the surface for a certain period of time (e.g., letting it stand for 3 to 5 minutes). with an EPA-registered disinfectant to kill germs.
- Personnel performing the cleaning and disinfecting should use disposable gloves.
- Use damp cleaning methods. Dry dusting or sweeping can cause airborne virus droplets.
- Change mop heads, rags, and similar items used for cleaning and disinfecting frequently.
- Clean, disinfect, and dry equipment used for cleaning after each use.
- Items such as dishes, linens, or eating utensil do not need to be cleaned separately, but it important to note these items should not be shared or used by others.

* All Information gathered from <https://nhchc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/flumanual.pdf> and the CDC <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>