

Staying Safe While Receiving In-Home Services

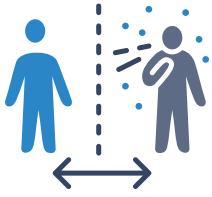
Commonwealth In-Home Services Guidelines for Families and Individuals



COVID-19 (also known as coronavirus) is a disease caused by a virus that is easily spread from close contact with someone who has the disease. Not everyone who has the disease develops symptoms or feels sick. The only way to avoid COVID-19 is to avoid contact with people. However, you may find that in-home service provision is the best choice for you or your family to support overall health, safety, and well-being. There are several things that you and your service provider can do to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19. Taking the steps below will help keep everyone healthy and safe. You and all who participate in in-home services should follow these guidelines.

- When you speak to your service provider for the first time, talk about any concerns that you might have and agree on steps that you and your service provider will be taking to protect both your family and the service provider.
- Your service provider should contact you before each visit to screen for COVID-19 risk. Before each screening call and visit, review the symptoms of COVID-19. According to the Pennsylvania Department of Health, common symptoms of COVID-19 include: fever, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, diarrhea, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, and new loss of taste or smell. If you or anyone you have been in contact with has any of these symptoms, are waiting for test results, or has tested positive for COVID-19 (even if you don't have any symptoms), reschedule the in-person visit or ask for a virtual visit instead (if available).
- During the screening call before each visit, ask the service provider if they have any symptoms of COVID-19. If the provider has any symptoms, has been in contact with anyone who has symptoms, is waiting for test results, or has tested positive for COVID-19 (even if they do not have any symptoms), reschedule the appointment or ask for a virtual or telehealth visit (if available). Ask if the service provider intends to follow the Commonwealth In-Home Services Guidelines during the in-home visit.
- In order to lower the risk of spreading COVID-19, everyone over the age of 2 who will be in the house during the visit must wear a clean cloth face covering or a mask that covers their entire mouth and nose, unless they have a medical reason that makes them unable to wear one. If you or someone in your home does not have a mask, let your service provider know during the screening call. If your mask becomes wet or soiled, put on a new mask.





- If the child or other person receiving in-home services has issues (that are not medical in nature) with wearing a cloth face covering or mask, work with the service provider to develop a plan to support the use of a face covering.
- To limit the risk of COVID-19 spread to others, only individuals who must be at the visit should be in the room or nearby when services are being provided. Limit interactions during service delivery with other family members or friends who are not essential to the session.
- Avoid touching your mask, eyes, or any other parts of your face.
- As much as possible, maintain 6 feet physical distance between the persons who are in the session and the service provider. Talk to your service provider about how specifically social distancing will be practiced during the in-home visit.
- Avoid unnecessary physical contact (handshakes, hugs, etc.) with the service provider.
- Indoor spaces with poor air flow may increase the risk for spread of COVID-19. When possible, open windows to improve air flow. If appropriate, meet outdoors rather than indoors.
- Practice hand washing. Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water before and after being around other people or touching objects or surfaces. Use hand sanitizer when soap and water is not available. Wash hands right before and right after your visit with your service provider.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with your elbow (even when wearing a face mask), instead of your hands. If your face covering becomes soiled or wet, put on a new mask.
- Before and after the visit, clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces that the service provider will be in contact with. Use a cleaning product and method that kills COVID-19. A list of suggested cleaning products is available online: <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2-covid-19>.

To learn more about how Pennsylvania is responding to COVID-19, visit: <https://www.pa.gov/guides/responding-to-covid-19/>.

To view resources and information for those with autism and those who care for people with autism relating to the current COVID-19 outbreak, visit <https://aidinpa.org/> and <https://paautism.org/resource/coronavirus-resources/>.