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INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL IN THE HOME DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Information Brief for Parents and Caregivers:
PRACTICES WHEN A PARENT/CAREGIVER, A FAMILY MEMBER OR A CHILD HAVE COVID-19

1. **I am a parent/caregiver sick with COVID-19 and still have to care for my infant/child. What should I do to prevent the infection from spreading to my infant/child or other family members?**

It is recommended to seek an alternative care provider if you have a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19. If you are sick and cannot isolate yourself completely from the rest of your family, please follow these steps to reduce the possibility of spreading COVID-19 to your infant/child or a family member:

- Isolate yourself within a well-ventilated room and/or keep a physical distance of approximately 2 metres as much as possible.
- Always wear a mask (single-use or cloth mask) if available and wash /sanitize your hands with hand sanitizer <u>before</u> and <u>after</u> caring for your infant/child and a family member, including:
  - when within a close distance (less than 2 metres)
  - touching (dressing, washing, toileting)
  - preparing food
  - feeding (please see a separate brief on breastfeeding and formula feeding for more information)
  - touching infant's/child's or other family member's clothes, items and environment (i.e., furniture, linens, toys, dishes, etc.)
- Do **not** share your food, drinks, dishes and other items (toothbrushes, towels, clothes, electronics, remote control devices, etc.) with your child and other family members.
- If possible, do not share the same bathrooms with other family members and put down the toilet lid when flushing.
- At least <u>once daily</u>, clean and disinfect surfaces that you touch often (i.e., toilets, bedside tables, doorknobs, phones, television remotes, etc.) using the approved hand-surface disinfectant. The list of products can be found on *Health Canada Website: Hard-surface disinfectants and hand sanitizers (COVID-19): List of hard-surface disinfectants.* For detailed instructions on how to clean your house, please see another Health Nexus COVID-19 Pandemic brief on *House and Toys Cleaning.*

*Please note that **cleaning products** remove germs, dirt, and impurities from surfaces by using soap (or detergent) and water. Cleaning **does not** necessarily kill germs, but by removing them, it lowers their numbers and the risk of spreading infection; **disinfecting products** on another hand kill germs on surfaces using chemicals (Health Canada, 2020).*

Tips on how to properly wash or sanitize hands can be found on Public Health Agency of Canada website: Reduce the Spread of COVID-19 – Wash your Hands.

Instructions on how make a non-medical cloth masks can be found on *Health Canada Website: instructions on Making a Sew and Non-Sew Cloth Face Covering*.

Please go to the *Ontario Public Health website* for the instructions on how to properly **put on**, **remove** and **discard** a face mask. Please remember that both single-use and cloth masks need to be removed and discarded when they become damp or soiled. If you choose to reuse the cloth mask, it can be laundered with other items using a **hot** cycle (60-90 C°) and then completely dried.

2. **My infant/child has COVID-19. How can I care for them safely to reduce the risk of getting sick?**

When caring for an infant or child with suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 (even if they show no symptoms), it is best to arrange for the same family member to provide all direct care until a child tests negative for COVID-19.

Please remember that older adults, people with underlying medical conditions and those who are immunocompromised are at increased risk for contracting the disease, so those people should not be taking care of the infant/child and should not visit, if possible.

Parents and caregivers should follow these instructions when taking care of an infant/child with COVID-19:

- Do not put a facemask on an infant/child who is less than 2 years old, and/or who has difficulty breathing.
- Encourage your child to cough and sneeze in their sleeve or a tissue as much as possible.
- Encourage your child **not** to touch their face.
- Try your best to wash or sanitize your child's hands after they have coughed or sneezed, touched their face, after using the toilet, as well as before and after eating.
- When you are in close contact with your infant/child (within less than 2 metres) and need to provide care, including toileting, diapering, feeding, washing, bathing, dressing, wiping face, etc., do the following:
    - wear disposable gloves (instruction on how to safely remove and discard gloves can be found here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ATU383IIfT8)
    - wear a single-use or a cloth mask
    - wash your hands before putting the gloves on and after taking them off, or if not available before and after caring for your child.
- Do not share food, drinks, dishes, clothes, towels, toothbrushes, electronics, and linens with your infant/child.
- Wear disposable gloves and a mask when handling infant's/child's laundry. Dirty laundry can be washed with other items on a **hot** cycle. For detailed instructions on how to clean your house, please see another Health Nexus COVID-19 Pandemic brief on *House and Toys Cleaning.*
- Ensure that physical distancing with other family members is maintained as much as possible during mealtime and socializing.
- **Isolate yourself according to Health Canada instructions.**

If you have more questions about infection prevention and control, please contact: Olga Bondar, Health Promotion Consultant at *o.bondar@healthnexus.ca*

References:

Health Canada: *Coronavirus disease (COVID-19): How to isolate at home when you may have COVID-19.* https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/covid-19-how-to-isolate-at-home.html

Health Canada: *Cleaning and disinfecting public spaces (COVID-19).* https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/cleaning-disinfecting-public-spaces.html

Public Health Ontario: *When and How to Wear a Mask.* https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/factsheet/factsheet-covid-19-how-to-wear-mask.pdf?la=en

Health Canada: *Coronavirus disease (COVID-19): How to care for a person with COVID-19 at home – Advice for caregivers.* https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/how-to-care-for-person-with-covid-19-at-home-advice-for-caregivers.html

Health Canada: *Coronavirus disease (COVID-19): How to care for a child with COVID-19 at home – Advice for caregivers.* https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/how-to-care-for-child-with-covid-19-at-home-advice-for-caregivers.html

Public Health Agency of Canada: *Reduce the Spread of COVID-19 – Wash your Hands.* https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/phac-aspc/documents/services/diseases-maladies/reduce-spread-covid-19-wash-your-hands/eng-handwashing.pdf

Health Canada: *Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19). Vulnerable Populations and COVID-19.* https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/vulnerable-populations-covid-19.html

WHO: *Home care for patients with COVID-19 presenting with mild symptoms and management of their contacts.* https://www.who.int/publications-detail/home-care-for-patients-with-suspected-novel-coronavirus-(ncov)-infection-presenting-with-mild-symptoms-and-management-of-contacts