



Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

MENU >

Providing Spiritual and Psychosocial Support to People with COVID-19 at Home (Non-US Settings)

Updated Nov. 23, 2020

[Print](#)

Many people who get sick or lose a family member want their spiritual leader to provide spiritual support. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the safest means of providing spiritual and psychological support is by phone, video, or through private social media chat platforms. Spiritual leaders may pray, share theological and scriptural reflections, and share messages of hope.

If in-person spiritual support is needed, this document provides guidance so that it can be done as safely as possible.

- Maintain at least a distance of 2 arm lengths (2 meters) from others, including when distributing food or praying.
- Wear a mask to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- Consider meeting outside where it is easier to keep people apart and where there is more ventilation.

If you must enter the home dwelling of a sick person:

- Wash your hands before entering and after leaving the home; for visits lasting a number of hours, wash hands often while in the home.
 - Scrub hands for 20 seconds to remove harmful germs.
 - If soap and water are not readily available, you can use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Doing this will help keep you from contracting or spreading COVID-19 in the community.
- When in the home, open windows and doors to allow natural ventilation.
 - Do not open windows and doors if doing so poses a safety or health risk to children or other family members (e.g., risk of falling or triggering asthma symptoms)

Spend a few minutes speaking with others in the household about how they can minimize their risk of getting COVID-19. Tell members of the household that a person with mild symptoms in the household should:

- Isolate themselves from other family members, if possible.
- If it is not possible to safely isolate from others, follow government guidance for COVID-19, which may include wearing a mask or going to a community isolation center.

While visiting the family:

- Offer words of hope.

- It is best not to touch **anyone** while praying for them to prevent the risk of contracting or spreading COVID-19.
- If the sick family member is having trouble breathing, chest pain, or confusion, someone should call the COVID -19 hotline, contact the nearest clinic, or call an ambulance.
- Wash your hands before you leave the house. Wash your hands before and after you remove your mask. Wash your hands* for 20 seconds with water and soap or diluted chlorine solution, or use an alcohol-based hand rub to help prevent getting COVID-19 or spreading it in the community.

Checklist of items to review or bring with you before visiting homes

- A mask
- Alcohol-based hand rub with at least 60% alcohol
- Tissues
- [Home based care kit](#):* 📄 Paracetamol, disposable gloves, wash cloth, calling card, disinfectant, soap, mask
- List of local COVID-19 information and updates (e.g. list of isolation centers)
- List of social support services available (e.g. a prayer phone line, email communication, a private social media prayer group)
- List of preventive actions to emphasize (see below)

Preventive actions to emphasize during in-person visit

- Stay home when sick (except when you need emergency care for a health condition or medical care)
- Wear a mask (non-medical mask or cloth face covering) if you leave your home or if you cannot isolate yourself from other family members at home.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or use the inside of your elbow. Throw the tissue away in a trashbin immediately and wash your hands
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces in the home
- Limit as much as possible close contact with others in the home who are sick or show symptoms (keep at least 2 arm lengths or 2 meters away) Anyone sick or infected should separate themselves from others by staying in a specific “sick room” or area (if available)
- You are responsible for helping to keep your community safe by following recommended preventive actions:
 - Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands, especially your eyes, nose, or mouth
 - Know and share only facts about COVID-19 and help prevent the spread of rumors and stigma in your community

Check with health authorities for information and recommendations on community actions designed to prevent and limit exposure to COVID-19.

Providing Spiritual and Psychosocial Support to People with COVID-19 at Home (Non-US Settings)

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/global-covid-19



Many people who get sick or lose a family member want their spiritual leader to provide spiritual support. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the effectiveness of providing spiritual and psychosocial support may change, either in person or through virtual social media. If a person cannot support in person, this document provides guidance on how to do so as safely as possible.

If you cannot physically visit the person, it is recommended that everyone present:

- Maintain at least a distance of 2 meter lengths.
 - Contact from others, including when distributing food or prayer.
- Wear a mask to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- Consider meeting outside when it is safer to keep people apart and where there is more ventilation.

If you must enter the home dwelling of a sick person:

- Wash your hands before entering and after leaving the home, for each time you enter the home, with hands others visible in the home.
 - Use hand sanitizer when you cannot wash your hands.
- If you are wearing a mask, you should avoid touching your face, especially your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- When in the home, open windows and doors to allow extra ventilation.
- Do not remember and/or if they are easily available, take them to the person who is sick.

Spread of the infection among other members of the household about how they can reduce their risk of getting COVID-19. Tell members of the household that a person with symptoms in the household should:

- Isolate themselves from other family members, if possible.
- If it is not possible to safely isolate from others, follow government guidance for COVID-19 which may include wearing a mask or going to a community isolation center.



Providing Spiritual and Psychosocial Support to People with COVID-19 at Home (Non-US Settings) [PDF]

This document provides guidance so that it can be done as safely as possible.

Last Updated Nov. 23, 2020

Content source: National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases (NCIRD), Division of Viral Diseases