

# Staying Safe While Providing In-Home Services

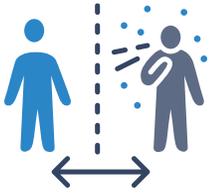
## Commonwealth In-Home Services Guidelines for Service Providers



**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. Although there is no guarantee that there will be no transmission among individuals, there are several things that can reduce risk. Service providers implementing in-home services should follow these Commonwealth In-Home Service Guidelines to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19. The list below addresses the mitigation steps that service providers and families should take to create the safest conditions possible in which to provide services. If providers assess a situation and determine that there are insufficient strategies in place in the home to reduce risk, they should reschedule or suggest a virtual visit.

- Before each visit, assess yourself for any symptoms of COVID-19 and complete any other screening protocol required by your organization. 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 encountered is experiencing any symptoms, you should not provide in-home services. Either reschedule the in-person visit or suggest a virtual visit (if available) based on guidance from the specific provider agency and communication with the family.
- Prior to a home visit, call the individuals with whom you will be interacting and do a verbal assessment for common COVID-19 symptoms. If anyone participating in service delivery are experiencing symptoms or has been in contact with anyone experiencing potential symptoms, reschedule the in-person visit or offer a virtual visit instead (if available). Review the Commonwealth In-Home Service Guidelines with the family or individual and confirm that they intend to follow the guidelines while you are interacting.
- Have sufficient Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to keep yourself safe (i.e., facemasks, hand sanitizer, and gloves (if needed)).
- To reduce the risk of COVID-19 spread, only the individuals who must be at the visit should be in the room or nearby during the in-person session. Request that the individual or family member limit interactions during service delivery with other family members or friends who are not essential to the session.





- Always wear a clean face mask that covers your entire mouth and nose.
- Avoid touching your mask, eyes, or any other parts of your face.
- Avoid unnecessary physical contact (handshakes, hugs, etc.) with individuals in the household.
- Unless necessary to service delivery or the home has insufficient space, maintain a physical social distance from others by staying at least 6 feet away. Discuss with the individual and/or family members about how specifically social distancing will be maintained throughout the in-home visit.
- Indoor spaces with poor ventilation may increase the risk for spread of COVID-19. When possible, ask that windows are opened to help improve ventilation. If appropriate, meet outdoors rather than indoors.
- Practice consistent hand washing. Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water before and after encounters with other people or objects or surfaces. Use hand sanitizer in between interactions when soap and water is not available. Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer directly before and after an in-home visit.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with your elbow (even when wearing a face mask), instead of your hands. Change any mask that becomes soiled or wet.
- Limit items that are brought in and out of homes; only bring essential items with you.
- After each visit clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces using a cleaning product and method that is proven to kill COVID-19 on surfaces. Disinfect your cell phone, laptop, pens, toys, any items that were taken into the home, and vehicle interior after each visit. A full 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/>.