

# Practice Management Tips for responding to COVID-19



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In cooperation with Southern Evals, HBS and  
Rural Health Clinics Information Exchange

# Pre-screening and Screening Patients

Ask a few simple questions when patient call to schedule:

- Are you having any respiratory symptoms?
  - Coughing
  - Fever
  - Congestion
  - Runny Nose
  - Sneezing
  - Sore Throat
- Have you traveled recently? Where? When?
- Have you been around anyone who has traveled recently or who has been exposed to the flu or Covid-19 virus?

## **COVID-19 and Other Respiratory Illness Protocols**

### **When Scheduling Appointments: Ask 3 Questions**

1. Are you experiencing any respiratory symptoms? (cough, fever, congestion, sore throat, runny nose)
2. Have you been exposed to the flu? If so, who, when, and where?
3. Have you or anyone you know traveled outside of the United States recently? If yes, who, where and when?

### **When Receiving Walk-Ins: Ask 3 Questions**

1. Are you experiencing any respiratory symptoms? (cough, fever, congestion, runny nose, sore throat)
2. Have you been exposed to the flu?
3. Have you or anyone you know traveled outside of the United States recently? If yes, who, where and when?

Depending on you're the privacy of your registration desk, you may choose to screen the patient using a paper questionnaire. Have this questionnaire available in the language(s) used by the majority of your patient population. See attached sample.



## Respiratory Illness and Travel Questionnaire

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Which provider are you seeing today? \_\_\_\_\_

1. Are you experiencing flu or respiratory symptoms today?

Fever	Yes	No
Cough	Yes	No
Congestion	Yes	No
Runny Nose	Yes	No
Sore Throat	Yes	No

2. Have you recently traveled outside of the United States or been in an international airport or port of entry?

Yes or No

3. If yes:

Where \_\_\_\_\_

When \_\_\_\_\_

How long were you there? \_\_\_\_\_

Purpose of trip \_\_\_\_\_

# Develop Your Protocol for Patients at Risk

- Conduct a tabletop exercise scaled to your facility
- Geographic Location
- Known exposure
- Known cases in your state, county, city
- Patient Demographics
- Provider Judgement
- Clinic Footprint/Clinic Size
- Availability for referral, transfer, or admission

### **When Checking-In a Patient or Rooming a Patient**

If the patient is experiencing symptoms but has not been exposed to the flu and has not traveled outside of the country, offer the patient a face mask. Advise the clinical staff that there is a possible respiratory illness.

If the patient has been exposed to the flu OR has been outside of the country or has been exposed to someone who was traveled internationally, require the patient to wear a mask. Advise the staff that you have a potentially high-risk patient.

If the patient has a known exposure to someone who may have been exposed to or has tested positive to COVID-19, remove the patient from the waiting area and place the patient in a designated exam room. Alert the provider on duty of the situation. Alert nursing staff to use PPE including masks and gloves when providing patient care.

### **Turning Around Exam Rooms**

All exam rooms should be cleaned between patients. Use a hospital-grade wipe to clean all surfaces-equipment, counter tops, tables, doorknobs, faucets, etc. Change table paper. Use commercial disinfectant spray for surfaces which cannot be cleaned with a wipe. Observe all kill/wet/dry times.

### **Waiting Room Cleaning**

Clean waiting room surfaces several times a day. Do not wait for routine housekeeping services. If you use tablets for registration, wipe those down in between patients. Wipe down phones, refreshment stations, furniture, doorknobs, and toys.



# Policies and Plans

- Revise any of your written policies that may change because of your new processes or procedures.
- May be able to add addendums or supplemental documents to your infection control plan.
- Revise your Emergency Preparedness Risk Assessments and Plan to include pandemic event if deemed necessary.
- Train or retrain providers and staff on any policy or plan revision.
- Train or retrain providers and staff on current policies that are not being followed
  - ***Disinfection and Sterilization/Environmental Cleaning***
  - ***Infection Control/Standard Precautions/Reporting Exposure***
  - ***Proper Use of PPE***
  - ***Sick Leave/Personal Time Off***

# Transparency and Communication

- Let your patients know WHY you are asking the pre-screening questions. It is for their wellbeing and the wellbeing of others,
- Let them know WHAT you are doing to make their clinic experience safer. Reassure them that you clean exam rooms and the waiting room and offer masks when appropriate.
- Reassure them that your medical staff is staying informed and are continually evaluating processes and procedures to provide the best care they can.
- Explain to them that they wait a little longer while rooms are being properly cleaned or as part of the screening process.
- Reassure them that privacy, confidentiality and security is being safeguarded according to HIPAA.
- Offer handwashing resources and other patient education.





# CDC RESOURCES

TRAINING, PATIENT EDUCATION  
AND PUBLIC AWARENESS

<https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/materials.html>

# CDC Handwashing Posters

<https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/posters.html>



# CDC Fact Sheets

<https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/fact-sheets.html>

## ¡Detenga los microbios! Lávese las manos

### ¿CUÁNDO?

- Después de ir al baño.
- Antes, durante y después de preparar alimentos.
- Antes de comer.
- Antes y después de cuidar a alguien que tenga vómitos o diarrea.
- Antes y después de tratar cortaduras o heridas.
- Después de cambiarle los pañales a un niño o limpiarlo después de que haya ido al baño.
- Después de sonarse la nariz, toser o estornudar.
- Después de tocar animales, sus alimentos o sus excrementos.
- Después de manipular alimentos o golosinas para mascotas.
- Después de tocar la basura.

### ¿CÓMO?



**Mójese** las manos con agua corriente limpia (tibia o fría), cierre el grifo y enjabónese las manos.



**Frótese** las manos con el jabón hasta que haga espuma. Asegúrese de frotarse la espuma por el dorso de las manos, entre los dedos y debajo de las uñas.



**Restriéguese** las manos durante al menos 20 segundos. ¿Necesita algo para medir el tiempo? Táranselo dos veces la canción de "Feliz cumpleaños" de principio a fin.



**Enjuáguese** bien las manos con agua corriente limpia.



**Séquese** las manos con una toalla limpia o al aire.

**Mantener las manos limpias es una de las cosas más importantes que podemos hacer para detener la propagación de microbios y mantenernos sanos.**



Este material fue elaborado por los CDC. La campaña La Vida es Mejor con las Manos Limpias es posible gracias a una asociación entre la Fundación de los CDC, GUNO y Shapiro, El HHS y los CDC no respaldan productos, servicios ni empresas comerciales.

## Handwashing at Home, at Play, and Out and About

Germs are everywhere! They can get onto your hands and then you wash throughout the day. Washing hands at key times will help you make a lot of the most important steps you can take to get rid of germs and avoid spreading germs to those around you.

### How can washing your hands keep you healthy?

Germs can get into the lining through our eyes, nose, a cut mouth and make us sick. Handwashing with soap removes germs from hands and helps prevent sickness. Studies have shown that handwashing can prevent 1 in 3 diarrhea-related illnesses and 1 in 5 respiratory infections, such as a cold or the flu.

### Handwashing helps prevent infections for these reasons:

- People often touch their eyes, nose, and mouth without realizing it, introducing germs into their bodies.
- Germs from unwashed hands may get into foods and drinks when people prepare or consume them. Germs can grow in some types of foods or drinks and make people sick.
- Germs from unwashed hands can be transferred to other objects, such as door knobs, tables, or toys, and then transferred to another person's hands.

### What is the right way to wash your hands?

1. Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap.
2. Rub your hands by rubbing them together with the soap.
3. Lather all surfaces of your hands, including the palms, backs, between your fingers, and under your nails. Soap lathering for 20, count 20 seconds. How do you know? Have the "Happy Birthday" song twice.
4. Rinse your hands under clean, running water.
5. Dry your hands using a clean towel or air-drying them.



**Center for Disease Control and Prevention**  
 National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases

# Using Posters and Fact Sheets

- Select poster designs and fact sheets which are compatible with your patient populations. They are available in English and Spanish. They are available with illustrations and with more detailed text. Use posters which will be understandable.
- Laminate the posters and fact sheets for easy cleaning and durability.
- Place strategically around the clinic—waiting rooms, patient information binders, restrooms, exam room, food areas.
- Have paper copies available as patient education handouts and teaching tools.

# CDC HANDWASHING VIDEOS

<https://youtu.be/d914EnpU4Fo>



The image shows a screenshot of a YouTube video player. The address bar at the top displays the URL: `youtube.com/watch?time_continue=120&v=d914EnpU4Fo&feature=emb_title`. Below the address bar is a search bar with the text "Search" and a magnifying glass icon. The main content area features a video thumbnail with a light blue background. The text on the thumbnail reads: "WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT HANDWASHING". The word "WHAT" is in a large, bold, blue font, while "YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT" is in a smaller, blue font. "HANDWASHING" is in a very large, bold, blue font. In the bottom left corner of the thumbnail, there is the CDC logo (a blue circle with a white eagle) and the text: "U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Disease Control and Prevention". The background of the thumbnail shows a close-up of hands being washed with white soap suds.

# KID-FRIENDLY VIDEO

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qJG72sycQB8>



# USING VIDEOS AND PODCASTS

- Play videos or podcasts in your waiting rooms or in patient rooms with tablets or patient education systems.
- Provide links for patients to watch at home.
- Provide links to daycare centers, Head Start programs, schools, or civic groups.
- Ask to be a guest presenter at a community event.

# CDC Resources

- Printable Stickers
- Social Media Badges and Buttons
- Posters
- Fact Sheets
- Campaigns
- Videos
- Podcasts

<https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/materials.html>



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Patty Harper is CEO of InQuiseek, LLC, a business and healthcare consulting company based in Louisiana. She has over 21 years of healthcare experience in the areas of healthcare finance & reimbursement, health information management, compliance, and practice management. She began her healthcare career as a hospital controller and reimbursement analyst. Patty holds a B.S. in Health Information Administration (cum laude) from Louisiana Tech University. She is credentialed through AHIMA as a RHIA, CHTS-IM, and CHTS-PW. Patty successfully completed AHIMA's ICD-10 Academy and has been recognized as an ICD-10 Trainer. She is also Certified in Healthcare Compliance (CHC®) thorough the Compliance Certification Board. Patty is a frequent speaker and contributor for national, state and regional and rural healthcare associations on these and other reimbursement-related topics. She has held memberships regional, state and national organizations throughout her healthcare career including NARHC, NRHA, AHIMA, MGMA, and HFMA. Patty currently serves on the Board of NARHC and LRHA.

