**04/10/2020**

**Recommendations on what to do when you return home after your shift is over at IPC or in homecare:**

**Ways To Prevent Carrying COVID-19 Home**

**1. Leave All Non-essential Items, Like Tote Bags, at Home**

According to the World Health Organization, there are [two main transmission routes](https://www.who.int/publications-detail/water-sanitation-hygiene-and-waste-management-for-covid-19) for COVID-19: respiratory and contact.

"Droplets may land on surfaces where the virus could remain viable; thus, the immediate environment of an infected individual can serve as a source of transmission (contact transmission)," t[he website states](https://www.who.int/publications-detail/water-sanitation-hygiene-and-waste-management-for-covid-19).

Bring only what you need to the workplace, such as ID, money, & food, to decrease the risk of transmitting the virus when you return home.

**2. Take a Shower as Soon as You Get Home From a Shift**

Just as aggressive hand washing prevents transmission via touch, scrubbing in a hot shower will also help get the virus off of your body.  Many nurses, especially those working in high-risk areas, should shower immediately upon returning home.

**3. Disinfect Phones, Pens, Credit Cards, or Anything Else That You Brought to Work**

Current evidence suggests that novel coronavirus [may remain viable for hours to days](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html) on surfaces made from a variety of materials.

The [CDC recommends](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html) cleaning visibly dirty surfaces with a detergent soap and water before disinfection to prevent transmission of COVID-19 in community settings.

Here are the guidelines for disinfection, from the [CDC](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html) website:

"For disinfection, diluted household bleach solutions, alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol, and most common EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective.

Diluted household bleach solutions can be used if appropriate for the surface. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for application and proper ventilation. Check to ensure the product is not past its expiration date. Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser. Unexpired household bleach will be effective against coronaviruses when properly diluted."

**4. Bring a Change of Clothes and Shoes to work, Change Before Leaving Work or Before Entering Your Home**

Kendyl, an RN with two children aged 4 and 9, has her own ritual for preventing the spread of COVID-19 to her family.

She wears scrubs to work and then changes into new scrubs for her shift -- then, at the end of her shift, changes back into her original scrubs to leave the hospital. When she gets home, she immediately changes again before entering the house, throws those scrubs into the washing machine, and immediately showers in hot water.

**5. Leave Work Shoes in a Designated Place (Ideally the Car or Garage)**

Change your shoes before you get into the car and put them in a bag in the trunk or garage.  Clean them weekly with a strong disinfectant.

**6. Hold the Hugs Until You’ve Taken All the Steps Above**

Have a conversation about how COVID-19 is transmitted with everyone you live with, [including children.](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/talking-with-children.html) Eliminate miscommunication, in advance, by explaining that you need to wait until you disinfect your items and shower before you spend time together.

Consider calling home after a shift to let them know you will be coming in. If you have little ones who are too young to understand, it might be easier to run straight to the bathroom so they can't interact with you until you’ve had a chance to shower.

**7. Continue to Follow the Experts**

There is misinformation being spread via social media such as Facebook or Pinterest, with "safety hacks" or other ineffective methods of preventing the spread of COVID-19.

The two best sources of information at this time are from the CDC or the WHO. If you personally know someone that you are 100% sure is a credible expert in epidemiology you can seek information from them too. Many people seem to “know someone, who knows someone” who is giving information, often with no evidence to back it up.

Get the facts directly from credible sources, to protect yourself and your family. Share a link to the [CDC](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html) and [WHO](https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus#tab=tab_1) website with family and friends. Encourage them to do the same.

**8. Remember to Ask for Support**

The COVID-19 pandemic is increasing anxiety and depression for many people, especially nurses and doctors. Take time to tend to your self-care needs in-between shifts.

The health of our nurses is important!  Especially now, as we tackle the COVID-19 crisis, and the demand for nurses is higher than ever. Nurse Jess even went viral on Tik-Tok for sharing her decontamination ritual

9. **Safe handling, washing, and disinfecting of dirty laundry items worn at work is important.**

Below are recommendations on how to handle and safely clean items like any clothing worn at work, linens, hamper bags and other dirty laundry.

* At the end of the work shift, healthcare workers can remove medical scrubs or other clothes worn at work; put dirty laundry in a plastic bag, seal the bag, and leave it outside of your home for 48 hours before laundering, which should kill most viruses. The plastic bag should be thrown in the trash and not reused.
* Perform hand hygiene after handling dirty laundry [RHC’s Hand Hygiene Policy](https://rainbowhospicecare.sharepoint.com/:w:/g/pol/EXcFIcNEbuhXpJtNY-roPyAB1wP3UyoIi25hMBl7IE4z1g?e=bGnUZP)
* When handling dirty laundry, try not to shake dirty laundry because shaking the items can scatter germs into the air
* To kill germs, wash and dry your laundry at the highest temperature the fabric can stand. It is important to use the warmest appropriate water setting for the items and dry the items completely to kill germs. Follow the manufacturer’s instructions for the laundered items. It is not necessary to separate healthcare worker’s items from other family member’s items.
* Linen clothes hamper bag can be laundered with clothing. Non-linen hamper should be cleaned using a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection. For disinfection, diluted household bleach solutions (5 tablespoons or 1/3 cup of bleach per gallon of water), alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol, and most common EPA-registered household disinfectants are recommended. Another option is to use a plastic bag liner inside the clothes hamper and then throw the bag away. Wash your hands after you are done.
* For non-washable clothing (dry-clean only), follow the same guidelines listed above. Put them in a plastic bag, seal the bag, and leave it outside of your home for 48 hours before laundering as you normally would. The plastic bag should be thrown in the trash and not reused.