



Dear Patients and Families,

In this difficult time, we know you may have many questions and concerns about Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).

Please read and review this guide. This information has been compiled from the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Florida Department of Health (FL DOH). As you have probably heard, this is a new disease. Doctors and scientists are learning new things every day in an effort to find safe, effective testing, treatment, and vaccines to identify, treat, and prevent COVID-19. Until those are available, there are actions you can take to keep yourself, your household, and others safe from catching or spreading it.

Who is at greater risk? Some examples are below


- People who are 60 or older.
- Those who have weakened immune systems such as cancer patients, patients with HIV/AIDS, and people taking immunosuppressing medications including, but not limited to, chemotherapy and anti-rejection drugs that transplant recipients must take.
- People with diabetes (either Type 1 or Type 2), heart and/or lung disease.

If you or your household members are at increased risk for COVID-19 complications, please consult your primary care physician. Hospice patients and members of their households may contact Avow directly with questions or concerns. We have nurses on duty 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Please understand that if you are not an Avow patient we may refer you back to your primary care physician.

Practice good personal health habits and keep your home at low risk for COVID-19


Practice everyday preventive actions now.

- Wash your hands often, for about 40-60 seconds. Sing “Happy Birthday” or “Row, Row, Row Your Boat” 4 to 6 times. Each song takes about 10 seconds. You do not have to use special soap. Just wash your hands, especially after going to the bathroom, before eating, and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. Always wash your hands with soap and water if your hands are visibly dirty. If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Apply a squirt about the size of a nickel, and rub all over your hands for at least 20 seconds, making sure to clean between your fingers.
- Avoid close contact with others who are sick. During the outbreak, do not allow visitors who are sick into your home, and avoid going where there are or may be sick people.
- Family members should stay home when they are sick, except to get medical care.

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- If you as a hospice patient develop cold or flu symptoms, call Avow right away so we can provide supportive care.
 - Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue, and immediately throw the tissue away. Do not place used tissue on tables, beds, etc. Cough into your elbow when possible.
 - Discard trash bags frequently when they contain used tissues. You may also throw them in a plastic grocery bag or baggie. The goal is to not allow any germs to move from the tissue to other surfaces that others may touch, and possibly transfer germs to them.
 - Clean frequently touched surfaces and objects regularly (e.g., tables, countertops, light switches, doorknobs, and cabinet handles) using a regular household detergent and water, then a disinfectant. If you do not have disinfectant wipes or sprays, you can use a bleach water solution. Do **not** mix bleach with anything except water, and be sure to dilute it as instructed below. Do **not** add extra bleach. It does not make the disinfectant better, and may result in harmful fumes.
 - 5 tablespoons (1/3rd cup) bleach per gallon of water or
 - 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water
 - Practice social distancing. That means keeping a distance of 6 feet from others and limiting close contact. We know that is not always possible, so do your best to keep close contact for less than 10 minutes at a time.
 - Social distancing does not mean you must stay inside your home at all times.
 - If you are **not** sick, you may go outside for a walk, or go to the grocery store or pharmacy when you need food or medicine. Keep a distance of 6 feet or more when around others.
 - Do not hug or shake hands with visitors or friends.
 - Stay home from work and all other activities that might bring you into contact with others when you are sick with COVID-19 symptoms.

In the event a member of your family is currently under isolation precautions, try to choose a room and bathroom in your home that can be used to separate sick household members from those who are healthy, if possible.

- Plan to clean these rooms frequently, throughout the isolation period, which is typically 14 days.
- Avoid sharing personal items like food and drinks, remote controls, phones, etc.
- Provide your sick household member with clean, disposable facemasks to wear at home, if you have them, to help prevent spreading COVID-19 to others.
- Clean the sick room and bathroom frequently to remove any germs from things they have touched. Avoid unnecessary contact with the sick person.

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- Watch for COVID-19 symptoms in others, including yourself. These symptoms may appear **2-14 days after exposure**.
 - Fever
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath

If you develop **emergency warning signs** for COVID-19, get **medical attention immediately**.
Emergency warning signs include*:

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion or inability to arouse
- Bluish lips or face

*This list is not all-inclusive. Please consult your medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning. Hospice patients, please call Avow.

After a COVID-19 outbreak has ended

COVID-19 may recur seasonally like the flu. However, you are not alone. Across the world, people are working together, and some of the greatest minds are developing and testing vaccines and treatments. Some people have experienced mild symptoms, and many are recovering with only supportive measures when no medications were available, even on a trial basis.

Continue to practice everyday preventive actions. Stay home when you are sick; cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue, or cough into your elbow; wash your hands often with soap and water; and clean frequently touched surfaces and objects daily.

Take care of the emotional health of your household members. Make time to unwind and remind yourself that strong feelings will fade. Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories about COVID-19 or other catastrophes. Connect with family and friends. Do things that make you smile or laugh. This can boost your immune system and lessen anxiety.

Members of the Avow team are always willing to answer questions you may have concerning your loved one and precautions to take. Please do not hesitate to call Avow at 239-261-4404.

Stay Well,

The Avow Infection Control Team