

# Self-Isolation Handbook for COVID-19 Patients



A handbook  
for patients self-isolating  
at home and others  
in the household

First edition



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Tokyo iCDC Expert Board



# Introduction

The novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) continues to spread around the world. Since this is humankind's first experience with COVID-19, we are faced with many uncertainties and limited information. However, as research progresses, we are learning more and more about the types of situations in which the virus is easily transmitted from person to person, as well as how to prevent infection. Advances and progress in treatment and recovery are being achieved, so that those who contract COVID-19 can recover more safely and be given added peace of mind.

Anyone can contract COVID-19. And, as the virus transmits, infection spreads to others.

Therefore, it is important that you properly understand the precautions to take in order to protect yourself and lower the risk of infection.

This handbook was published for patients diagnosed with COVID-19 recovering at home and their families. It contains information on infection prevention measures, focusing especially on the points we hope you will pay close attention to during the at-home recovery period.

We hope that you will use this handbook, and that it will help to ease your concerns as you recover at home.

Prof. Mitsuo Kaku

Chairperson

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(This handbook was created based on information current as of January 2021. It will be updated to reflect the latest information as needed.)

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## For patients diagnosed with COVID-19

In Tokyo, those diagnosed with the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) who meet certain conditions are being asked to recover at home. This handbook contains points that you as the patient should be aware of, as well as information for your family or other household members, in order to help you feel safe and prevent the spread of infection to others during your self-isolation period.

## For those living in the same household

This handbook contains information on what to be aware of when caring for a patient that is self-isolating with COVID-19.

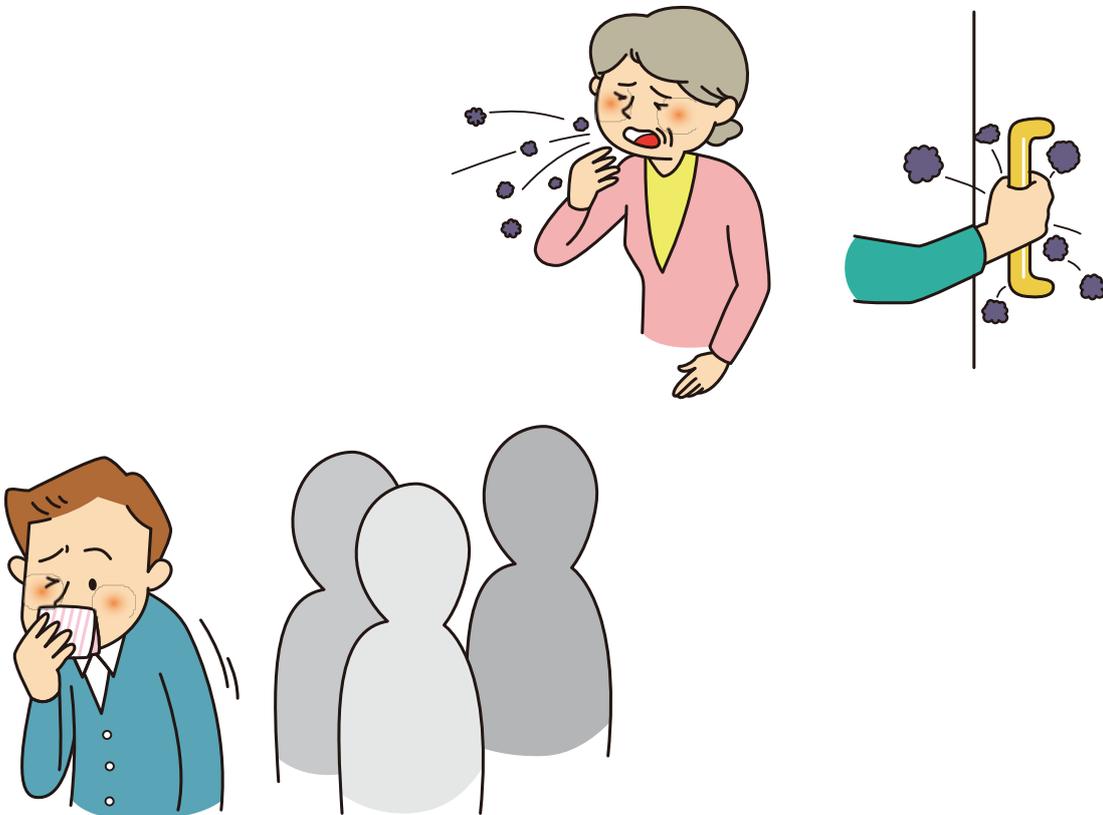
Household members should also check their own health condition on a daily basis. Wear a mask when going out and wash your hands frequently.

The following pages contain details on preventing infection at home. Carefully follow the steps here to prevent the spread of infection to those in your home and to others.

## Characteristics of COVID-19

### Implement steps to prevent infection with a thorough understanding of the characteristics of COVID-19

- ◆ COVID-19 is mainly spread by respiratory droplets (small liquid particles) from the mouth or nose of an infected person.
- ◆ The virus can remain for some time in the air.
- ◆ The virus can remain for days on surfaces. Others can become infected when they touch these contaminated surfaces and then touch their mouth or nose.
- ◆ This virus can be inactivated, meaning the virus is rendered non-infectious, using household cleaning products, soap, alcohol-based solutions, or sodium hypochlorite (次亜塩素酸ナトリウム), the active ingredient in household bleach.



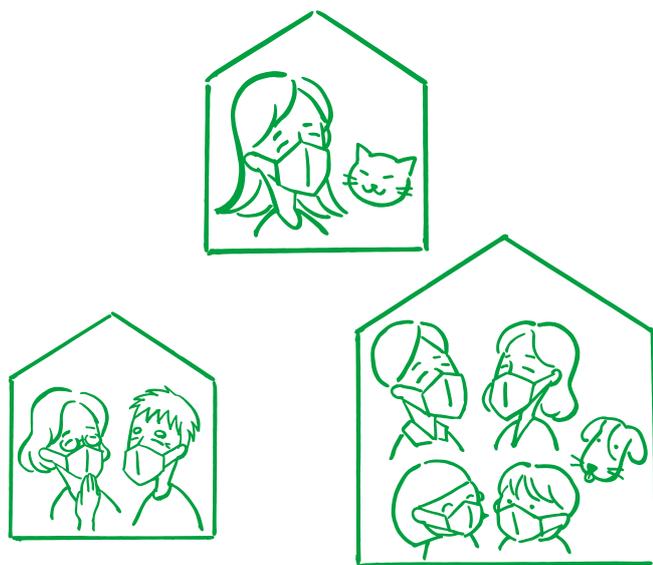
## Requests to patients at home

- ◆ Do not leave your home during the self-isolation period.
- ◆ Dispose of used tissues in a plastic bag. Tightly close the bag before throwing it away.

If living with others:

- ◆ Use a separate living space from others and be sure to stay in your room as much as possible.
- ◆ When you leave your room, clean your hands with alcohol-based hand sanitizer and wear a mask.
- ◆ Ventilate the room by opening windows for 5-10 minutes every hour.

Although patients who live alone do not need to disinfect their living space, please tidy up the area on a daily basis to keep your living environment clean.



## Eight key points for preventing infection at home

Follow these steps to prevent the virus from spreading to household members, family, and others.

1	Use separate rooms
2	Limit the number of caregivers
3	Both the patient and the caregiver should wear masks
4	Patient and caregiver should wash hands frequently
5	Keep rooms ventilated during the daytime
6	Clean and disinfect common areas and high-touch surfaces in the home
7	Launder clothes and linens regularly
8	Tightly close garbage bags when throwing away

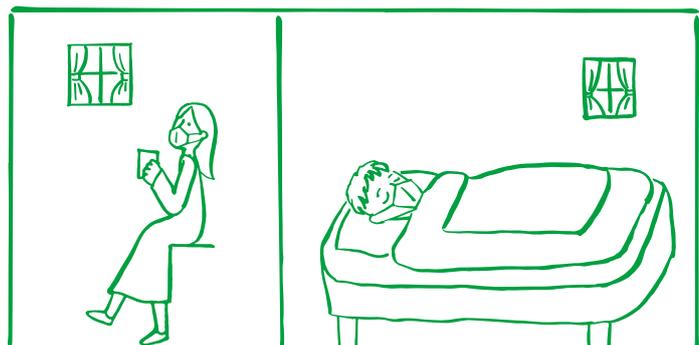
Each step will be explained in the following pages.

## 1

## Use separate rooms

**It is very important that patients stay in their room and limit contact with others as much as possible.**

- Maintain separate living space.
- If a separate room cannot be provided due to your housing situation, use dividers or curtains to partition off an area at least two meters from others and make sure the room has good air flow.
- Do not share linens (towels, sheets, etc.), tableware, toothbrushes or other personal items with household members.
- Self-isolating patients should take their meals in their own rooms, if possible. Disposable tableware that can later be thrown away in a tightly closed plastic bag should be used.
- If sharing tableware, wash dishes with dish washing detergent. Dishes can be soaked for 10 minutes in a sodium hypochlorite solution diluted to 0.05% and then washed as normal if you feel concerned.
- Wash hands or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer and wear a mask before leaving your room, talking with other household members, or before using the bathroom and other shared spaces.
- Take a shower or bath after all other household members. Spray down the shower room after use and open any shower room windows to ventilate the room.



## 2

# Limit the number of caregivers

If possible, limit the number of caregivers to one person.

- Reduce the risk of infection by limiting the number of caregivers to one person. The caregiver should not be someone at high risk for severe illness from COVID-19, such as a person with an underlying condition such as diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, kidney disease, and respiratory disease.
- Both the patient and caregiver should wear a mask when the caregiver is in the room and/or providing care.



### Patient

Wear a mask

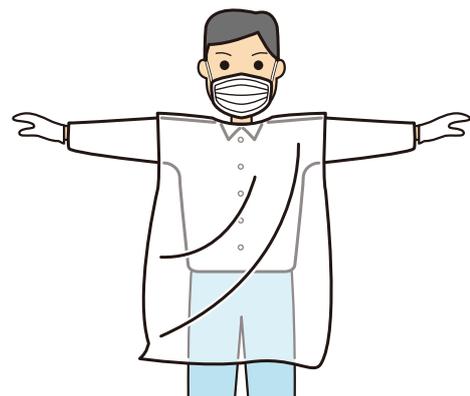


### Caregiver

Wear a mask when entering the room. Wear gloves when you touch or have contact with the sick person's blood, stool, or body fluids, such as saliva, mucus, vomit, and urine. Frequently wash hands or use a hand sanitizer

- In addition to a mask, wear a disposable apron and disposable gloves when wiping the patient, or when there is the possibility of coming in contact with bodily fluids.

\* If you do not have a disposable apron, a large, plastic garbage bag can be used. (See image)



- Wash hands immediately after leaving the patient's room.
- Caregivers should take their temperature twice a day and carefully watch to see if they are developing any symptoms.

# 3

## Both the patient and the caregiver should wear masks

Patients and household members can prevent the spread of infection by wearing a mask.

- Patients should wear a mask while around other household members.
- If possible, a medical procedure mask (such as a surgical mask) should be worn.
- Wear a mask when providing care to the patient. Dispose of the used mask in a plastic bag and tightly close the bag when throwing away.
- The caregiver should be especially careful not to touch the front of the mask, their eyes, or nose when providing care.
- Thoroughly wash hands each time you provide care.

### Wear your mask properly

#### Wearing a mask



Make sure the mask is facing the right way



Bend the nose wire to conform to your nose



Extend the mask so that it fits over your nose and under your chin

#### Removing a mask



Without touching the surface of the mask, remove by the ear loops



Dispose of the used mask straight into a waste bin



Wash hands or use a hand sanitizer

# 4

## Patient and caregiver should wash hands frequently

If a person touches their eyes, nose, or mouth with hands contaminated with the virus, the virus could infect them via their mucous membranes or conjunctiva.

- Frequently wash hands in running water with soap. Thoroughly dry hands with your own personal towel, a paper towel, or a tissue.
- Avoid sharing towels with household members.
- Have alcohol-based hand sanitizer prepared so that hands can be cleaned at any time.

### Wash hands with running water and soap



① Wet hands with water, apply soap, and thoroughly rub hands together to create lather



② Wash the back of each hand with fingers interlaced



③ Lather fingertips and under nails



④ Thoroughly clean between fingers



⑤ Use palms to scrub thumbs in a circular motion



⑥ Wash wrists



⑦ Rinse hands well under running water



⑧ Dry hands with a paper towel (use the paper towel to turn off the faucet)

### Clean hands with alcohol-based hand sanitizer



① Apply an appropriate amount of hand sanitizer to palms



② Rub sanitizer over palms and the back of each hand



③ Rub sanitizer on the back of and in between fingers, making sure not to miss any areas, including fingertips



④ Use the palm of your hand to rub sanitizer around your thumbs in a twisting motion



⑤ Use the palm of your hand to rub sanitizer around your wrists in a twisting motion



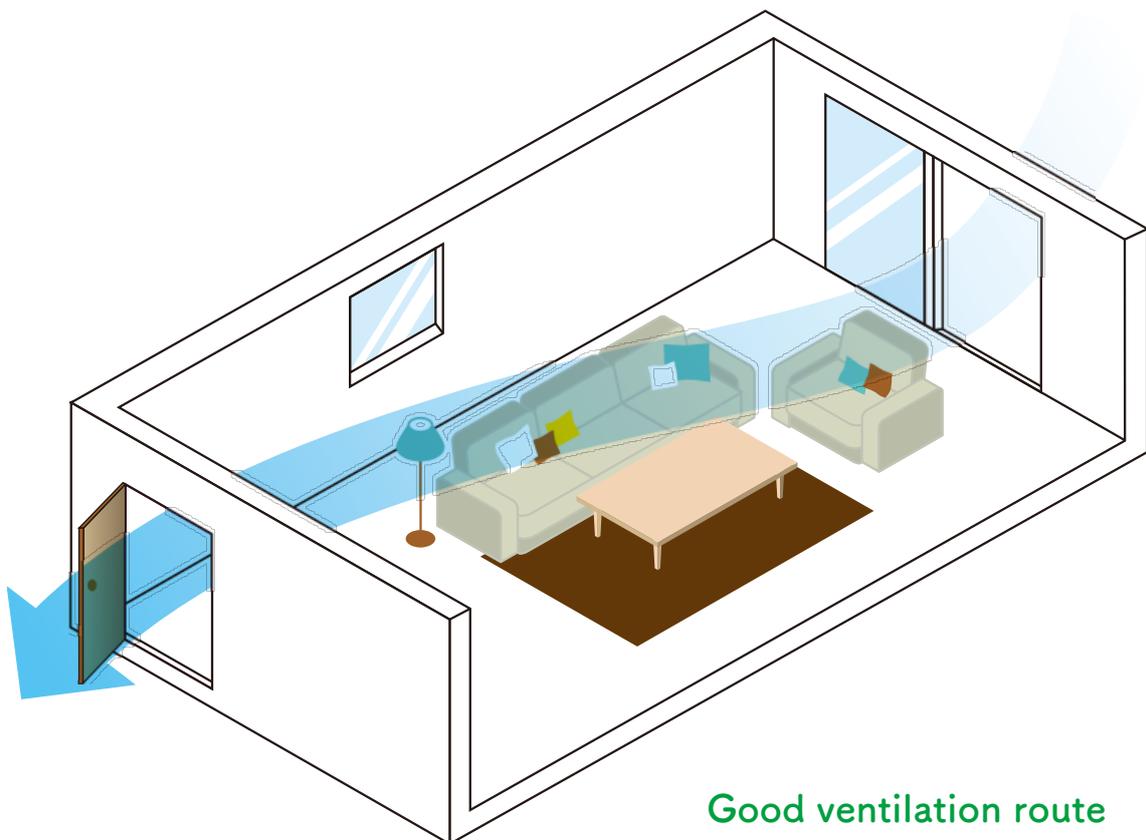
⑥ Continue rubbing sanitizer until hands are dry

# 5

## Keep rooms ventilated during the daytime

Virus particles can remain in the air for an extended period when ventilation is poor.

- Regularly ventilate the patient's room.
- Open windows in the patient's room and the rooms of other household members once an hour for about 5-10 minutes for ventilation.
- If windows are small or there is only one window, create air flow with a ventilating fan (kitchen or bathroom exhaust fan). Air conditioners with fresh air intakes are also effective.



Good ventilation route  
Open windows diagonally across  
from each other

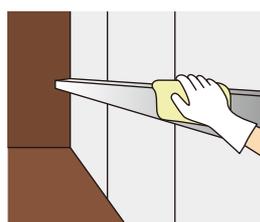
## 6

## Clean and disinfect common areas and high-touch surfaces in the home

Detergents, such as dishwashing soap, household cleaning products, and laundry detergent, which contain surface acting agents (surfactants), soap, alcohol (at least 60% alcohol content), and sodium hypochlorite, the active ingredient in household bleach, are effective against SARS-CoV-2.

When an infected person touches their nose or mouth, the virus adheres to their hand. By touching surfaces such as hand railings, tables, and doorknobs, the virus is transferred to environmental surfaces. When others unknowingly touch those surfaces, and then touch their mouth, nose, or eyes, they may become infected.

- Open windows and air out rooms
- Disinfect frequently touched surfaces (doorknobs, light switches, remote controls, bathroom vanities, toilet levers, etc.)
- Disinfect by wiping the surface rather than just spraying the area with a disinfectant, etc.
- One to two times a day, wipe down frequently touched surfaces, such as doorknobs, tables, hand railings, and light switches, with a 1:100 dilution of household detergent. Wipe down bathrooms (showers, bathtubs, etc.) and toilets with a household cleaning product after each use. If you are concerned, use a paper towel or tissue soaked in alcohol or diluted bleach (0.05% sodium hypochlorite solution) to wipe the surface.



- If a bathroom is shared, make sure to properly ventilate the room using the bathroom exhaust fan, etc. After an infected person uses the bathroom, disinfect the toilet seat, toilet flushing lever or controls, doorknobs, and any other frequently touched surfaces using a paper towel or tissue soaked in alcohol or diluted bleach (0.05% sodium hypochlorite solution).



### Cleaning and ventilating the bathroom

Following use of the bathroom, use a cloth soaked in disinfectant to wipe down routinely touched surfaces, such as the toilet, toilet seat, doorknob, light switch, toilet flushing lever or controls.

Disinfectant: Alcohol or a 0.05% dilution of sodium hypochlorite solution (household bleach).

- Use disposable gloves when disinfecting. When finished, remove the gloves and thoroughly wash your hands.

\* Bleach (sodium hypochlorite solution) can cause metal to rust. After disinfecting such surfaces with bleach, be sure to wipe them down with water to avoid corrosion.

### Reference How to make disinfectant (using sodium hypochlorite solution)

\*The concentration of chlorine in chlorine-based bleaches varies by product. Please check the product label to verify the concentration. Some makers also provide instructions on their website.

Using a plastic (PET) bottle makes measuring easy! One capful is roughly equal to 5ml of liquid.



Concentration to be used	Concentration of bleach product	How to prepare	Purpose for use
0.1%	5%	Using a 500ml plastic (PET) bottle and corresponding cap, mix 500ml of water with 10ml of bleach product (2 capfuls).	To clean up bodily fluids (vomit, feces, etc.)
0.05%	5%	Using a 500ml plastic (PET) bottle and corresponding cap, mix 500ml of water with 5ml of bleach product (1 capful).	To disinfect cooking utensils, bathroom doorknobs, toilet seats, floors, clothing, etc.



#### When using sodium hypochlorite (household bleach)

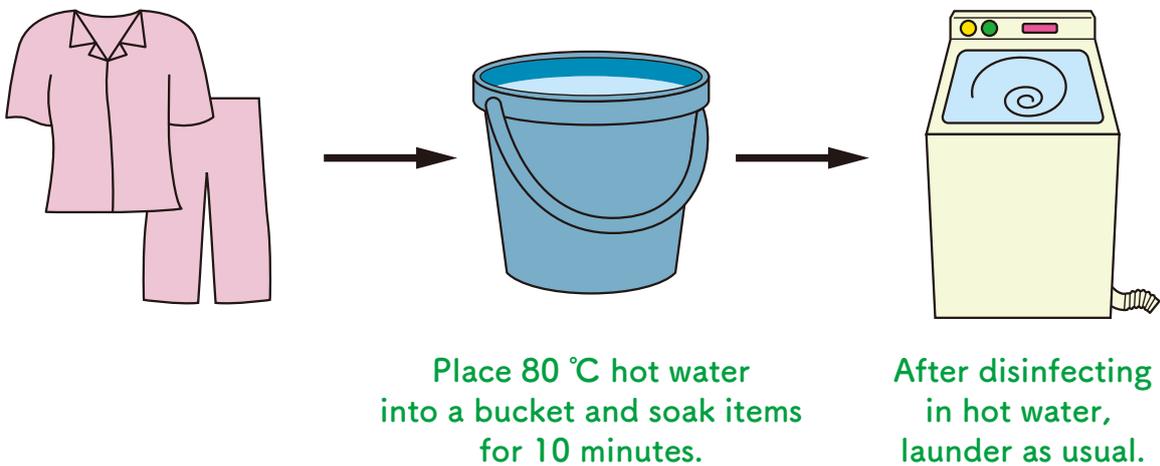
- Make sure to keep the room well ventilated when disinfecting.
- The diluted bleach solution loses effectiveness over time. Only make the amount you need each time.
- Never ingest the solution! And, do not prepare batches of the disinfectant in advance.
- Never use the solution to clean hands.
- Bleach and the diluted bleach solution are dangerous substances.
- When temporarily storing the solution, make sure to keep it out of reach of children!

## 7

## Launder clothes and linens regularly

**Avoid sharing towels and clothing.**

- When there is the possibility that clothing or bedding (sheets, pillowcases, etc.) are soiled with bodily fluids such as feces or vomit, first disinfect the items by soaking them in hot water (at least 80 °C) for a minimum of 10 minutes. The items can then be laundered as usual.
- If you are concerned, launder the items of the person who is ill separately from those of others in the home.
- Using a heated clothes dryer is also effective.
- If you are not concerned about the color fading, using a diluted sodium hypochlorite (bleach) solution (0.05% concentration) is also effective.



## 8

## Tightly close garbage bags when throwing away

**Make sure to tightly close garbage bags when throwing them away.**

The virus also lurks on items such as tissues used to blow one's nose. When disposing of tissues used to wipe away bodily fluids, such as saliva or mucus, or other items used to care for the individual who is ill, make sure a plastic bag is already in place, lining the wastebasket, and place garbage inside the bag. Dedicate a wastebasket for the person infected. Be sure to tightly close the plastic bag so that you do not touch any of the tissues that have been disposed of.

If you are concerned, use two plastic bags to double-bag garbage, and wash your hands immediately after disposing of waste.



Reference: Precautions to take against COVID-19 for the general public (as of February 3, 2020)  
(Japanese Society for Infection Prevention and Control)



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