



Always There Home Care

*Ensuring safety and comfort at home
while preserving family assets*

ALWAYS THERE HOME CARE GUIDANCE ON PREPARATION, PREVENTION AND CARE OF COVID- 19 CLIENTS

March 2020

Instructions for Caregivers and Staff

Determining if you may have the disease:

If you develop a fever, cough, or other signs you may have COVID-19 infection, you should immediately contact your doctor and/or local medical center to discuss whether you should get tested for the virus.

The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus, including:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. When caring for client in home for extended hours, set alarm to wash hands every 2 hours. Use paper towels ONLY.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces. Use bleach and antibacterial agents
- Practice Social Distancing:
- Avoid close contact with people who are possibly sick, stay at least six feet away if possible. A good rule of thumb is to stay 6 feet away from everyone outside your home.
- Please note that the CDC is advising individuals to stay home when you are sick, particularly if you are experiencing the symptoms of potential COVID-19 infection as described above: fever, cough, and shortness of breath.
- Avoid shaking hands, hugging, or kissing.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth, especially with unwashed hands.

ATHC's actions to keep clients, families, and the community safe

ATHC has been working with the CT Department of Public Health, CT Association for Home Care and Hospice and the CDC to make sure our clients, staff, and the community we serve are supported against COVID-19.

- **Screening.** We are screening our employees and patients for possible exposure to COVID-19 and are working with hospital partners to screen any patients with possible signs of COVID-19. In addition, any staff who have returned from areas with high COVID-19 infection rates are required to self-quarantine for up to 14 days.
- **Education.** All staff have been trained in minimizing the chances of their becoming infected with COVID-19 and transmitting infection to those they care for, as well as in identifying the symptoms, safety, and screening practices.
 - **Communication.** ATHC utilizes frequent texts and emails to provide the most up-to-date information to staff
 - **Collaboration.** We are working closely with the CT Department of Public Health in addition to state and federal agencies and medical facilities, to make sure our procedures and guidelines reflect the most current medical information.
 - **Caregiver Continuity.** It is in the best interest of disease spread prevention as well as sound client care to have a limited number of caregivers assigned to each case. This has always been our practice but we are now mandating it for all cases.
 - **Identifying Illness.** If either caregiver or client is suspected of illness, especially respiratory symptoms and/or fever, they must seek medical care immediately. The provider will determine if additional virus testing will be required. The caregiver is removed from the case until stable with no infections. Each case will have back up caregivers in place to retain continuity.
 - **Social Distancing.** When mandated by state or federal government guidelines, we will comply by:
 - Spending minimal time in office, with distancing, electing to work from home
 - Conduct all caregiver candidates interviews remotely, applications submitted on line.
 - All meetings with staff or family members remotely managed
 - Office is cleaned weekly thoroughly with bleach and disinfectants.
- **PPE Distribution.** The company assumes responsibility to procure and provide caregivers and families with the necessary PPE to protect themselves at all times. This includes but is not limited to: handwashing materials hand sanitizer, paper towels, phone wipes, cleaning supplies, etc. Weekly visits will be made by office staff to replenish supplies without entering their homes.

Who is at risk from COVID-19?

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), people at high risk for developing a more serious case of COVID-19 are older adults and those with chronic medical conditions like heart, lung, or kidney disease. Those younger than 65 are also at risk if they have co morbidities as diabetes, or are immunosuppressed.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Symptoms of COVID-19 include a fever, cough, and shortness of breath. The CDC believes that symptoms can appear two to 14 days after exposure. Mild cases may seem like a cold or a lower respiratory illness, such as a bronchitis.

In those with weakened immune systems, including people with chronic illness and the elderly, the virus can cause severe symptoms. These may include difficulty breathing and high fever, and may lead to pneumonia or other severe infections.

What should I do if I think I might have COVID-19?

The most important thing is to stay calm. Remember, you are living in an area with the best health care systems in the world. **If you develop a fever, cough, or other signs you may have COVID-19 infection, you should immediately contact your doctor and/or local medical center to discuss whether you should be tested for the virus.**

Human Resource Changes to Minimize staff exposure

- All interviews for new staff are done on line, remotely.
- All applications are submitted on line via company website
- No visitors to office
- Family support and caregiver guidance provided virtually
- In compliance with CT DPH and federal guidelines, office is closed with office staff working remotely.

MANAGING THIS PANDEMIC IS DYNAMIC AND EVER EVOLVING. WE WILL SEND INSTANT UPDATES AS THE FEDERAL AND STATE GUIDELINES CHANGE.

Many thanks to our office staff and amazing, courageous caregivers for putting clients and families first while also protecting all of them and yourselves from exposure.