



The following information resources have been selected by the National Health Library and Knowledge Service Evidence Virtual Team in response to your question. The resources are listed in our estimated order of relevance to practicing healthcare professionals confronted with this scenario in an Irish context. In respect of the evolving global situation and rapidly changing evidence base, it is advised to use hyperlinked sources in this document to ensure that the information you are disseminating to the public or applying in clinical practice is the most current, valid and accurate.

YOUR QUESTION

What is the best evidence for home management of COVID-19?

What does the World Health Organization say?

Home care for patients with COVID-19 presenting with mild symptoms and management of their contacts¹

If there are patients with only mild illness and without underlying chronic conditions, providing care at home may be considered as long as they can be followed up and cared for by family members. Home care may also be considered when inpatient care is unavailable or unsafe: eg capacity is limited, and resources are unable to meet the demand for health care services. A trained healthcare worker should conduct an assessment to verify whether the residential setting is suitable for providing care and whether the patient and the household members are capable of adhering to the precautions that will be recommended as part of home care isolation: hand hygiene, environmental cleaning, etc.

Household members should adhere to the following recommendations:

- Place the patient in a well-ventilated single room — ie with open windows and an open door.
- Limit the movement of the patient in the house and minimize shared space.
- Household members should sleep in a separate bed.
- Ideally, assign one person who is in good health and has no underlying conditions to be caregiver; no visitors should be allowed.
- Perform hand hygiene after any type of contact with patients or their immediate environment.
- A medical mask should be provided to the patient and worn as much as possible.
- Caregivers should wear a medical mask that covers their mouth and nose when in the same room as the patient.
- Daily clean and disinfect surfaces that are frequently touched in the room where the patient is being cared for.

¹ World Health Organization. (2020). "Home care for patients with COVID-19 presenting with mild symptoms and management of their contacts". [https://www.who.int/publications-detail/home-care-for-patients-with-suspected-novel-coronavirus-\(ncov\)-infection-presenting-with-mild-symptoms-and-management-of-contacts](https://www.who.int/publications-detail/home-care-for-patients-with-suspected-novel-coronavirus-(ncov)-infection-presenting-with-mild-symptoms-and-management-of-contacts). [Accessed 26 March 2020].



What do the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (United States) say? **Interim Guidance for Implementing Home Care of People Not Requiring Hospitalization for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)²**

A healthcare professional should assess whether the residential setting is appropriate for home care. Considerations for care at home include whether: the patient is stable enough to receive care at home:

- Appropriate caregivers are available at home
- There is a separate bedroom where the patient can recover without sharing immediate space with others
- The patient and other household members have access to appropriate PPE — at a minimum, gloves and a face-mask

A healthcare professional should provide guidance for the patient/caregivers to implement best practice during home care.

What does the Health Protection Surveillance Centre (Ireland) say? **Patient information sheet for self-isolation at home³**

Home isolation is for those who are sick and are awaiting a COVID-19 test or are diagnosed with it and are well enough to stay at home. Patients will need to do this until they have had no fever for 5 days and it has been 14 days since they first developed symptoms. The following is suggested:

- Stay at home. Ask family and friends to help buying groceries/medications.
- Keep away from other people in your home as much as you can.
- Household members should care for any pets in the home.
- Clean your hands regularly and cover sneezes and coughs.
- No visitors are allowed.
- If possible, use a toilet that no one else is using.
- Clean all surfaces with cleaning products daily.

What does NHS Inform say? **Coronavirus (COVID-19): Stay at home advice⁴**

For those who have symptoms that may be caused by COVID-19 it is very important to stay at home. If you have to stay at home, stay at least 2 metres away from other people in your home whenever possible. You should sleep alone. It is recommended to wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds regularly. Avoid close contact with others by not having visitors, and asking a friend or neighbour to get your shopping or arranging for a delivery to be left at your door. Stay in a well-ventilated room with a window that can be opened and stay away from the other household members as much as possible. Plenty of water should be drunk during the day. If you stayed at home for 7 days because you had symptoms, you can return to work and your usual activities on the eighth day if you feel better and no longer have a high temperature.

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020). "Interim Guidance for Implementing Home Care of People Not Requiring Hospitalization for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)". <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-home-care.html>. [Accessed 26 March 2020].

³ Health Protection Surveillance Centre. 2020. "Patient information sheet for self-isolation at home". <https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/selfisolationathome/Patient%20information%20sheet%20for%20self-%20isolation%20%20V.%202.2.pdf>. [Accessed 26 March 2020].

⁴ NHS Inform. 2020. "Coronavirus (COVID-19): Stay at home advice". <https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-covid-19-stay-at-home-advice>. [Accessed 26 March 2020].



What does BMJ Best Practice say?

COVID-19⁵

Patients with mild illness and no risk factors [ie age >60 years, presence of comorbidities] can be isolated at home when management in a healthcare facility is not possible. This will depend on guidance from local health authorities and available resources. Home care can be considered when the patient can be cared for by family members and follow-up with a healthcare provider or public health personnel is possible. The decision requires careful clinical judgement and should be informed by an assessment of the patient's home environment. Advise patients to limit their interaction, and avoid direct contact with their pets and other animals, especially while they are symptomatic. At this time, there is no evidence that pets and other animals can spread COVID-19; however, caution is advised. Two negative test results on samples collected at least 24 hours apart are required before the patient can be released from home isolation. If testing is not possible, the patient should remain in isolation for an additional 2 weeks after symptoms resolve.

What does UpToDate say?

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)⁶

Home management may be appropriate for patients with mild infection who can be adequately isolated in the outpatient setting. Management of such patients should focus on prevention of transmission to others, and monitoring for clinical deterioration, which should prompt hospitalization.

Outpatients with COVID-19 should stay at home and try to separate themselves from other people and animals in the household. They should wear a facemask when in the same room (or vehicle) as other people and when presenting to health care settings.

The optimal duration of home isolation is uncertain. When a test-based strategy is used, patients may discontinue home isolation when there is resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and improvement in respiratory symptoms. When a non-test strategy is used, patients may discontinue home isolation when at least 7 days have passed since symptoms first appeared and at least 3 days have passed since recovery of symptoms.

What does the international literature say?

Coronavirus: Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Infection⁷

The patient is encouraged to stay at home except to seek medical care, to self-isolate to a single area of the house, preferably with a separate bathroom, to practice good hand and cough hygiene and to wear a face mask during any contact with household members. Patients should be advised that if a need for medical care develops, they should call their health care provider in advance so that proper isolation measures can be undertaken promptly on their arrival at the healthcare setting.

Household members or caregivers should:

- Wear face masks, gowns, and gloves when caring for patient; remove and discard all when leaving the room and do not reuse.
- Dispose of these items in a container lined with a trash bag that can be removed and tied off or sealed before disposal in household trash.
- Wash hands for at least 20 seconds after all contact; an alcohol-based hand sanitizer is acceptable if soap and water are not available.
- Not share personal items such as towels, dishes, or utensils before proper cleaning.

⁵ BMJ Best Practice. 2020. "COVID-19." BMJ Best Practice. <https://bestpractice.bmj.com/topics/en-gb/3000168/>. [Accessed 26 March 2020].

⁶ McIntosh, K et al. 2020. "Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)". In: Post, TW (ed.), *UpToDate*. Waltham, MA. <https://www.uptodate.com/contents/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>. [Accessed 26 March 2020].

⁷ ClinicalKey. 2020. "Coronavirus: Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Infection". https://www.clinicalkey.com#!/content/clinical_overview/67-s2.0-0e7112a3-e94d-4136-94ba-cfd9242ea43. [Accessed 26 March 2020].



- Wash laundry and high-touch surfaces frequently.
- Wear disposable gloves to handle dirty laundry and use highest possible temperatures for washing and drying, based on washing instructions on the items.
- Clean surfaces with diluted bleach solution or an EPA-approved disinfectant.
- Restrict contact to minimum number of caregivers and, in particular, ensure that persons with underlying medical conditions are not exposed to the patient.

Produced by the members of the National Health Library and Knowledge Service Evidence Team.[†] Current as at 26 March 2020. This evidence summary collates the best available evidence at the time of writing. Emerging literature or subsequent developments in respect of COVID-19 may require amendment to the information or sources listed in the document. Although all reasonable care has been taken in the compilation of content, the National Health Library and Knowledge Service Evidence Team makes no representations or warranties expressed or implied as to the accuracy or suitability of the information or sources listed in the document. This evidence summary is the property of the National Health Library and Knowledge Service and subsequent re-use or distribution in whole or in part should include acknowledgement of the service.

The following PICO(T) was used as a basis for the evidence summary:

	PATIENTS WITH COVID-19 WHO DO NOT NEED HOSPITALISATION
	HOME MANAGEMENT

Resources consulted: WHO, ECDC, HPSC, BMJ Best Practice, NHS Inform, UpToDate, Medline, Web of Science Google Scholar, Twitter and Google.

The following search strategy was used:

"covid-19" OR coronavirus OR "wuhan virus" OR "2019-ncov" OR "severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2" OR "2019 novel coronavirus" OR "2019 new coronavirus" AND "home management" OR "home-management" OR "home-care" OR "homecare" OR "home care"

[†] Ronan Hegarty, Librarian, Naas General Hospital [Author]; Brendan Leen, Regional Librarian, HSE South, St. Luke's General Hospital, Kilkenny [Editor].

