

# Communicating Positive COVID-19 Test Results to Patients

## Script and References for LG Health Staff Providing Notification

### SCRIPT

You recently had a test for COVID 19. Your test result shows that you have COVID-19. I am going to give you some important instructions to follow.

#### **Take care of yourself.**

- Most people only have mild symptoms.
- If you have mild symptoms, you can care for yourself at home.
- If your symptoms get worse or you are short of breath, call your doctor. If you don't have a doctor, you can call your closest urgent care center. When you call, let them know right away you have COVID-19.
- You can take acetaminophen (Tylenol) for a fever. Follow all instructions on the label.
- Your symptoms may last one week to several weeks.

#### **You must take steps to keep from spreading it to others.**

- **Stay home**
  - Even if you feel better, you must stay home until all three of these have happened:
    1. At least 7 days have passed since your symptoms started
    2. All your symptoms are gone
    3. You've had no fever or cough for at least 72 hours
  - Do not go to work, school, or public places. Don't use public transportation.
  - Leave your home only if you need to get medical care.
- **Cover your mouth**
  - Cover your mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Then throw the tissue in the trash and wash your hands right away.
  - If possible, wear a face mask if you are around other people or have to go to the doctor.
- **Wash your hands often**
  - Especially after you cough or sneeze.
  - Use soap and water, and scrub for at least 20 seconds.
  - If soap and water aren't available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- **Limit contact with pets and people in your home.**
  - If possible, stay in a separate bedroom and use a separate bathroom. If that is not possible, stay at least 6 feet away from others.
  - Don't share bedding, towels, cups and glasses, and eating utensils without washing them first.
- **Clean and disinfect your home every day.**
  - Use household cleaners and disinfectant wipes or sprays.
  - Take special care to clean things that you grab with your hands. These include doorknobs, remote controls, phones, and handles on your refrigerator and microwave.

**If it is an emergency, call for help.**

- Some people with COVID-19 have trouble breathing.
- Call 911 anytime you think you may need emergency care. For example, call if:
  - You have severe trouble breathing.
  - You have a dry mouth, dry eyes, very little urine, or feel very thirsty.
  - You are extremely confused or not thinking clearly.
  - You pass out (lose consciousness).
- When you call, let them know right away you have COVID-19.

**Please tell the people who have been close to you.**

- You need to let your close contacts know you have the infection.
- Close contacts are people you live with and anyone who has been within 6 feet of you for 10 minutes or more since you first became ill.
- You should notify your employer, if you work.
- Your contacts may not get sick, but they should stay at home and separate themselves from others for 14 days. If they develop symptoms, they should contact their doctor about testing. If someone in contact with you has no symptoms, they do not require testing but should stay home.

**Patients experiencing anxiety, overwhelming stress, grief, depression, or other mental health concerns:**

“Feelings of stress, anxiety, grief and worry are natural these days. If these feelings are overwhelming, it can be helpful to talk with a counselor. I would like to give you the phone number for the Behavioral Health Support Line, 717-544-4939 where there are counselors available every day from 7am-7pm who are there to help you and your family members during this challenging time for all of us.”

**SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR Healthcare Workers**

- Are you a Healthcare Worker or do you work in a Healthcare facility?
- Healthcare Workers or those who work in a healthcare facility will often have different return to work instructions. It is very important that you contact your employee health or human resources department to determine your eligibility to return to work.

**FOR REFERENCE**

**Pets**

- **Limit contact with pets & animals:** You should restrict contact with pets and other animals, just like you would around other people.
  - Although there have not been reports of pets or other animals becoming sick with COVID-19, it is still recommended that people with the virus limit contact with animals until more information is known.
  - When possible, have another member of your household care for your animals while you are sick with COVID-19. If you must care for your pet or be around animals while you are sick, wash your hands before and after you interact with them. See [COVID-19 and Animals](#) for more information

## Facemasks

- **If you have COVID-19 or symptoms like cough and fever:** If you have a facemask, you should wear a facemask when you are around other people and before you enter a healthcare provider's office.
- **If you are caring for others:** If the person who is sick is not able to wear a facemask (for example, because it causes trouble breathing), then people who live in the home should stay in a different room. When caregivers enter the room of the sick person, they should wear a facemask. Visitors, other than caregivers, are not recommended.

## Cleaning

- You should routinely clean high-touch surfaces in your "sick room" and bathroom. Let someone else clean and disinfect surfaces in common areas, but not your bedroom and bathroom.
- If a caregiver or other person needs to clean and disinfect a sick person's bedroom or bathroom, they should do so on an as-needed basis. The caregiver/other person should wear a mask and wait as long as possible after the sick person has used the bathroom.
- High-touch surfaces include phones, remote controls, counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables.
- Clean the area or item with soap and water or another detergent if it is dirty. Then, use a household disinfectant.
- Be sure to follow the instructions on the label to ensure safe and effective use of the product. Many products recommend keeping the surface wet for several minutes to ensure germs are killed. Many also recommend precautions such as wearing gloves and making sure you have good ventilation during use of the product.
- Most EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective.

Reviewed by:  
Brenda Buescher, MPH  
Haley Fuller, CHES

Updated 4/10/2020, 3:30 PM

If updates are made or needed, contact Brenda Buescher ([brenda.buescher@pennmedicine.upenn.edu](mailto:brenda.buescher@pennmedicine.upenn.edu))