

Caring for Covid at Home

Page 1 – The Glorious Earbud Test

So, your family member has just had an earbud up their nose, and they are positive! You thought you did everything you could to stay away from COVID-19. Don't beat yourself up about it, we know you care for your loved ones. So, now you can do everything you can to care for them at home. It's so important for you to stay calm and have a positive mindset while we work through this together.

This sneaky little virus is catchy, and not in a good way. So always mask up, sanitise and quarantine to protect other family members. While caring for a covid positive family member at home, remember to always keep surfaces and bedding sanitised and if possible, quarantine in a separate bedroom and bathroom.



Right! Let's start at the beginning.

Page 2 – Fear Is So Last Year, It's Time For The Facts

We know it's a lot to ask but do try keeping a positive mindset whilst you are caring for your loved one. Stress is known to lower your immune system which you need to get through this. So, breathe, relax, take it easy and maybe even get an immune booster like Immuenza. You've got this!

This book will help set your mind at ease as you take it on symptom by symptom. For most people, they will only experience a few of these symptoms for up to two weeks, building antibodies to fight off the virus.

There are some symptoms, however, that require immediate medical attention.

So remember, facts not fear! Let's get to know what we are dealing with.

Page 3 - The Symptoms

Don't worry, we know it looks like a lot. There are so many combinations of symptoms a person could experience. Some have one, some have few, some have all, so which ones do you?

Most common symptoms:

Fever: A temperature above 37 degrees Celsius.

Dry cough: A hacking cough that's annoying.

Tiredness: When you need to sleep more than usual.

Less common symptoms:

Aches and pains: When your muscles hurts all over.

Sore throat: Pain in the throat when you swallow.

Diarrhoea: A runny tummy.

Conjunctivitis: Itchy, red eyes,

Headache: When your head wants to explode.

Loss of taste or smell: Guess it doesn't matter what's for dinner tonight.

A rash on skin or discolouration of fingers or toes.

Serious symptoms: TAKE YOUR FAMILY MEMBER TO THE HOSPITAL

Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath

Chest pain or pressure

Loss of speech or movement

Now let's deal with these symptoms one by one.

Come on, we may even try and have a little fun.

Page 4 – Did Someone Turn Up The Heat?

Dealing With Fevers

Have you ever had an unwanted guest in your house and you try to make them uncomfortable to get them to leave? This is exactly what fevers do. It's your body's way of heating up to make it uncomfortable for the virus to live there. Your feverish family member may be complaining about how hot it is or they might be shivering with cold.

It's important to move the fever away from their head to protect the brain. You can do this by applying a cool, damp cloth to their forehead or making them a frozen hat. (see pictures) They can also have a tepid bath. (Don't make the water too cold or that could make them feel worse.)

Ask your pharmacist for a thermometer so you can check when they are having a fever (higher than 37 degrees Celsius). You can also ask your pharmacist to give you something over the counter with paracetamol in it, like ADCO-Napamol or Corenza-Para C which helps to bring down the heat.

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Updated by: Neil K. Kaneshiro, MD, MHA, Clinical Professor of Pediatrics, University of Washington School of Medicine, Seattle, WA. Also reviewed by David Zieve, MD, MHA, Medical Director, Brenda Conaway, Editorial Director, and the A.D.A.M. Editorial team.

<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003090.htm>

Page 5 – This May Be Hard To Swallow Sore Throats and Coughs

Coughing is another way your body is trying to kick out the Covid but please remember that the particles you are coughing out could be spreading to other people or surfaces. Don't forget to remind your coughing family member to cough into their elbow to stop the spread.

Coughing can be painful if you have a headache or sore throat so ask your pharmacist for a cough mixture that will ease your cough and soothe your throat.

Speaking of throats; as soon as your throat gets a tickle, start gargling with salt water to avoid getting a painful infection. You can also ask your pharmacist for an over the counter throat lozenge like Medi-Keel A to soothe your sore throat.

Sore Throats – Medi-Keel A (Cetylpyridinium chloride)

Svistushkin V.M., Nikiforova G.N., Shevchik E.A., Toporkova L.A. The effectiveness of topical drugs in the treatment of patients with acute inflammatory diseases of the pharynx. *Bulletin of otorhinolaryngology* . 2019; 84 (6): 112-117. <https://doi.org/10.17116/otorino201984061112>

Page 6 – Need More ZZZzzz? Dealing With Fatigue

Fatigue is a very common side effect of Covid, so if you have a sleepy sick person on your hands then don't worry. Sleep is another way your body fights the virus. Instead of using all your energy up at the gym, your body is saving energy for the fight against Covid. So, let your family member sleep while it quietly fights off the virus. Make your sleepy patient as comfy as possible but try and get them to sleep on their sides or sitting up slightly so that any mucus in their lungs doesn't settle there and cause an infection.

You can also ask your pharmacist for something over the counter to boost their energy with an energy supplement like Vita-thion or Liviton.

Page 7 – Aches And Pains Headaches and Body Pains

Believe it or not head and body aches are a good sign that their immune system is hard at work to get them better as soon as possible. Head aches are often caused by the blood vessels in their brain getting bigger to let more blood in and body aches are caused by your white blood cells having a full-scale war against the virus. You can soothe your sore sibling by making them a cup of tea, massaging their sore muscles and letting them rest.

For the headaches you could also ask your pharmacist for something over the counter with paracetamol, like Corenza-Para C or ADCO-Napamol and for the muscle aches you could ask them for an anti-inflammatory.

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Page 8 – Can You Taste That?

Loss of Taste and Smell

Another interesting symptom of Covid is a loss of taste and smell. Doctors still aren't certain why Covid causes this, but it should only last between a few days and a few weeks.

You can test your families' senses by blindfolding them and getting them to smell and taste various foods like lemon (sour), orange (sweet), grapefruit (bitter) or biltong (salty.)

As there is not much one can do to solve this, let's play the tasting game! It's a nice way to test for this symptom.

Page 9 – My Tummy Is Running

Diarrehoea

Not only does COVID affect your respiratory system, it can attack your tummy too, which no one finds fun.

This can cause an upset tummy. Just like when you run, you often need to drink a lot of water. So too, your body need lots of fluids when your tummy is running. You need to stay hydrated as you are losing all of your electrolytes and potassium. You can drink fruit juice or rehydration sachets to recover these. Stay away from fluids that have caffeine, alcohol or bubbles in them.

Also, ask your pharmacist for something over the counter that will settle your tummy as well as some probiotics. You will be solid again soon.

Page 10 – We Hate To Bring It Up

Nausea and Vomiting

There is nothing worse than feeling nauseas but that is another possible symptom that occurs when Covid tries to get into your tummy. Your tummy wants it out!

You can ease this *green feeling* with some aromatherapy by grating or slicing a lemon, peeling ginger or crushing some peppermint leaves near your patient. Remember, as in the case with diarrhoea, that if you are vomiting, you need to stay hydrated and keep up your electrolytes and potassium. You can drink fruit juice or rehydration sachets to recover these. Stay away from fluids that have caffeine, alcohol or bubbles in them.

You can also ask your pharmacist for some anti-nausea medication.

Page 11 – Don't Do Anything Rash Rashes

If your family member finds themselves with itchy skin and raised reddish welts, then they have a rash. Covid doesn't seem to directly cause rashes but it is another clear sign that your immune system is working overtime to get you better.

You can soothe your itchy skin with a cool cloth or you could contact your pharmacist and ask them about an antihistamine, like Allergex Non-Drowsy, to stop your family member from scratching.

J Allergy Clin Immunol. 1990 Oct;86(4 Pt 2):684-6. doi: 10.1016/s0091-6749(05)80241-6.PMID: 1977785

Page 12 – The Lung And Short Of It

Looking After Your Lungs

A pair of organs in the body we really need to look after is the lungs. Try some controlled breathing exercises with your family member by breathing in through your nose and into your tummy and out through your mouth. Try to take 2 or 3 times longer to breathe out than you did when you breathed in. You can do this by pursing your lips when breathing out or by slowly blowing up a balloon. You can do it to – it'll keep you calm!

Ask your pharmacist about getting an oximeter as this will help you monitor how much oxygen you are getting. You need to keep your oxygen saturation levels above 94%.

Another thing you can add to your covid care pack is a spirometer. An easy exercise tool to help your family member increase their oxygen intake. (It is only available at hospitals and physio therapists.)

Page 13 – The Lung Road To Recovery

Looking After Your Lungs

If your family member has a chesty, wet cough it means that they have some mucus in their lungs. You want to get that out of there as soon as possible. Ask your pharmacist about getting some decongestant chest rub and some decongestant cough medicine like Expigen that will help loosen the phlegm in their lungs.

Frederick J. Curley, Richard S. Irwin, Melvin R. Pratter , Diane H. Stivers , Gary V. Doern , Paul A. Vernaglia, Andrew B. Larkin, and Stephen P. Baker
<https://doi.org/10.1164/ajrccm/138.2.305> PubMed: 3057962

- ! Give your family member the cough medicine and then boil the kettle.
- ! Put a small smear of the chest rub in a bowl and add the boiling water.
- ! Place a towel over your their head and get them to breath in the steam deeply.
- ! Gently drum your palms on your loved one's back to further loosen the phlegm and make sure they cough up any gooey stuff and then spit it out.

It's gross, we know ... but we didn't say fighting a virus would be pretty. Luckily, you aren't fighting this battle alone.

Page 14 – There's Someone In Your Corner Partner With Your Pharmacist

Your friendly pharmacist is there to help you through this exhausting time, so you do not have to go it alone. Pharmacists are some of the unsung heroes that have already helped so many families go through what you are going through right now. If you have questions, they will have an answer for you, so don't be afraid to ask. You can get Vitamin D and C, Zinc as well as all the other items mentioned in this book. All of them are important support medications that will help your immune system overcome this virus.

Isn't it wonderful to know there is someone knowledgable who cares about you while you are caring for your family at home?

Page 15 – When Should You Consider Hospital?

We had hoped you wouldn't get here, but remember this book is about taking it day by day, symptom by symptom.

If your family member exhibits any of the serious symptoms mentioned on page 3: Shortness of breath, chest pain or loss of speech or movement, then you should get them to a hospital. Also, if their oxygen level falls below 90% on the oximeter, take them to a hospital.

Finally, if a doctor advises you to take them to a hospital... you guessed, it take them to the hospital.

At this point, the hospital is the best place for your loved one. This next part of our little book will share a few tips to help you through this process.

Page 16 – A Few Tips About Hospitals Things You Might Not Know

Hospitals are very busy places and due to Covid restrictions, you can't just pop in for a visit. So, it is important that your family member has access to a phone, a phone charger and data so that they can be in contact with you.

If you take them to a private hospital, make sure to contact your medical aid for pre-

authorisation.

Try and find out who their doctor is and their practice number for medical aid purposes.

You might want to pack them a bag with fresh underwear, toiletries and a towel so that when they are able, they can feel clean and fresh.

Some hospitals have porters that will take packages up to the ward. Try and find out which ward they are in to make deliveries easier in the future.

We are in the middle of a global pandemic, and things are not what they should be. Try and find comfort in trusting the hospital system as they care for your family member. You might feel some anxiety in the lack of communication from medical staff but remember they are doing everything they can to assist all their patients and don't have much time to update you as often as you'd like.

Page 17 – Healthy Mind And Attitude We Should Have Started The Book With These

Here are some small tips and covid life hacks to ease the stress when caring for covid positive family members at home:

- A positive mindset is a key to success in fighting this virus. So, take some stress off your yourself by creating a whatsapp group for updates and taking the pressure off the patient when having to respond to well-meaning messages.
- Take a break from negative social media that could evoke fear or panic when you are trying to remain calm and positive.
- Spend time in nature. Walking around outside is good for your lungs and for your mind.
- Make sure your sickly family member gets sunshine as often as possible as being in the sun gives you vitamin D for free.
- Be thankful for all you have and be at peace knowing that you have done everything you can for you and your family.

Thank you for everything you have done. You are BRAVE.