



PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Frequently Asked Questions about Isolation for COVID-19

This handout answers some frequently asked questions for suspected or confirmed COVID-19 positive inpatients.

Why am I being isolated from other patients and staff?

The virus that causes COVID-19 is very contagious (easy to catch). To protect other patients and staff from the virus, patients who have or may have COVID-19 will be kept apart from other people as much as possible.

Why are staff wearing gowns, masks, eye protection, and other equipment?

To keep everyone safe, our staff must protect themselves and keep the virus from infecting other patients. The equipment you see our staff wearing will help keep the virus from spreading. Your healthcare provider may also ask you to wear a mask while they are in your room. If you need to leave your room for a test or a procedure, you will wear a mask, a clean hospital gown, and gloves.

Why does my healthcare team come into my room less often than other times I was in the hospital?

Your healthcare providers may enter your room less often and stay for shorter periods of time than what you've experienced in the past. They may also call your hospital room phone or cell phone to check on you. This is because the less time they spend in an isolation room, the lower the risk that your healthcare providers and their other patients will get sick from the virus.

What can I do to help with my feelings of isolation?

We understand that being in isolation can be scary. You may feel alone, scared, depressed, anxious, or frustrated. Here are some tips to help:

- **Stay connected to your family and friends.** While you may not be able to be with your loved ones in person, you can call, text, and video chat with them. You may find it helpful to plan daily calls with your loved ones that you can look forward to. If you feel up to it, you can also try video chatting while playing a game with your friends and family.
- **Try relaxation techniques.** Relaxation techniques, such as deep breaths, stretching, and meditating can help you manage stress. You can listen to free guided meditations offered by our Integrative Medicine Service by visiting www.mskcc.org/meditation. You can also find meditation, guided imagery, and other relaxing videos in the “My Learning” section on the interactive tv screen in your room. You can also attend an online class in group meditation, yoga, guided imagery, and other relaxation techniques. Email mindful@mskcc.org and ask our therapists to help you choose classes best for you.
- **Take a break from the news.** Take breaks from watching or reading the news, including what's on social media. The interactive tv screen in your room has a category called “Entertainment & Relaxation” where you can find movies as well as relaxation videos.

- **Try some distraction.** Activities such as reading, coloring, crossword puzzles, and word searches may help keep your mind busy. If you don't have anything like that with you, ask a member of your healthcare team for some.
- **Request an online music therapy session.** Music therapy can be relaxing and relieve stress. To request a session with an MSK music therapist, ask your nurse for a referral.
- **Meet one of our Caring Canines online.** You can schedule an online video visit through Zoom with our therapy dogs by emailing the Volunteer Office at volunteerresources@mskcc.org.

If you have any questions, contact a member of your healthcare team directly. If you're a patient at MSK and you need to reach a provider after 5:00 PM, during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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