

Supporting Clinicians Through the COVID-19 Pandemic

Tip Sheet: Protecting the Frontline Physician



This tip sheet offers suggestions on keep you and your family safe. Assume every patient is a COVID-19 patient until proven otherwise and assume not everyone is taking great care to avoid contamination. Wear your mask and gloves all the time!

- **You are extremely valuable and needed.**

- Do not feel bad at all in protecting yourself and your family.
- Talk to your family and discuss procedures for safety.
- If you live alone or have pets, take the same precautions.
- Separate as much of your home life away from your work life as possible.



- **Preparing for work – what to wear, take and leave home.**

- Use only scrubs – have several pairs on hand – depending on your work load – no less than seven sets if doing seven on/off.
- Use shoes that can be wiped down or washed easily. Shoes should have hard covers/toe boxes so your whole foot is protected and nothing can seep through the top.
- Wear socks that come at least 1/3 up your shin to cover your ankle if materials or specimens are dropped and splattered.
- Avoid taking other objects if not needed. Most with EMRs don't even need a pen these days but if needed, keep one in the scrub pocket.
- If you run on the cold side, wear a turtleneck or undergarment such as a winter weather ski top/bottom made of breathable material and can wash easily.
- Keep as much of your skin covered as possible. Wear a long-sleeved t-shirt. Some will keep skin exposed to wash it quickly after any exposure/splashes.
- Leave the white coats at home or in the office, and don't wear them during rounding or patient care visit.
- Leave the jewelry at home – yes – I even take off my wedding rings, earrings, etc.
- Take your stethoscope.
- Place your cell phone in a ziplock bag.
- Take your home, car and office keys – remove everything else that is extra – like those store rewards chips.

Center for Professional Health and Wellness

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY  MEDICAL CENTER

- Take the smallest wallet with just your drivers license and a debit/credit card if you need to stop for gas, groceries, etc.
- Take a lunch you can eat in your office, stock beverages and snacks in your office as well.

- **Heading to and from work.**

- Leave a set of comfortable cloths in the garage – sweatpants, basic t-shirt.
- Try, if possible, to use one car.
- Keep wipes and hand sanitizer in the car along with a face mask if you must stop on the way in/out.
- Wash your hands before leaving home.
- Once you arrive at work, leave all non-essential items locked in your trunk or glove compartment – out of sight.
- Place your mask on before leaving the car.
- Avoid using your hands on any doors, elevators, etc. Use gloves or a paper towel that can be disposed of once on site.
- When leaving the workplace, if you can, change and shower; but if that is not possible, wash your hands one last time and leave any significantly soiled objects in the hospital. Use the paper towel to dry to close doors and push elevator buttons or don a new pair of gloves.
- Avoid touching everything - as much as possible. Find paths that allow you to open doors without using your hands. Use the paper towel or gloves if you cannot find a straight, clean path. Use elbows on the elevator button if you don't have anything but then use hand sanitizer on the elbow at the next cleaning station.
- Discard the paper towel or gloves before you enter your car and place in the closest parking garage waste can. This way you are nearly clean entering the car.
- Remove your mask once in your car if not stopping on the way home.
- Use voice controls when possible in the car.
- When you arrive home, if you have a garage – pull in and decontaminate in the garage. Wash hands or use hand sanitizer and remove shoes before walking into the house.
- If needed, you can change into the sweats and t-shirt in the garage or make it to the shower in your undergarments.



Center for Professional Health and Wellness

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY  MEDICAL CENTER

- **Decontaminating before entering your home.**

- Use your garage, if able, to decontaminate and clean before entering the house.
- Keep basic plastic trash bags and cleaning wipes available in the garage.
- When you return home, remove clothing in the garage and place in the plastic bag.
- Wipe down car steering wheel and driver seat with a cleaning wipe.
- Wash hands after undressing and cleaning.
- Head straight to the shower – wash hair as well.
- Meditate, pray and find gratitude in the day while in the shower.



- **Engage with family:**

- Now you are ready to engage with your family.
- Be present. Engage. Have peace of mind you have done everything possible to protect them and yourself.

- **Taking call:**

- If you take call and go in frequently or are on a cycle on/off, you can consider separating from the family for that period of time – sleeping and showering in a guest bedroom for the call period, if that is an option.
- Engaging with family is important and your spouse/partner or significant other also needs you. Determine what cycle works best for all in the family meeting.

- **At the workstation:**

- Avoid touching your face or other body parts with your hands.
- Don't eat or drink at a clinical workstation.
- Wash your hands often.
- Use hand foam to clean phones and keyboards in your workstation.
- When using the restroom, foam in, wash hands, wash after you go, and foam out again to be on the safe side.
- Repeat this before stopping to eat for lunch or a break.

Center for Professional Health and Wellness

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY  MEDICAL CENTER

Resources: MH specialists, coaches, psychiatry, primary doctor, etc. Each picture is hyperlinked to the actual webpage. Simply click on the picture.

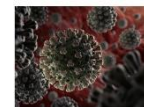
- American Psychological Association: <https://www.apa.org/> - click on *psychological help center*, then *find a psychologist*.
- International Coaching Federation: <https://coachfederation.org/> - click on *find a coach*.
- American Psychiatric Association: <https://www.psychiatry.org/> - click on *Patient/Families* then click *find a psychiatrist*.
- The American College of Physicians – COVID-19 Resources for physicians. <https://www.acponline.org/>
- The American Medical Association – resources for Physicians. <https://www.ama-assn.org/>
- The National Academy of Medicine – Well-being resources. <https://nam.edu/initiatives/clinician-resilience-and-well-being/clinician-well-being-resources-during-covid-19/>

Resources

- Find a Psychologist
- Order Free Brochures
- Request a Speaker

Find a Coach

PATIENTS & FAMILIES



COVID-19 (2019 novel coronavirus) resource center for physicians
5/27/2020

