Infection Prevention and Control for Professionals

Welcome to the Infection Prevention and Control training.

Although germs are found in nearly all our surroundings, a small portion of these germs can lead to serious consequences if left untreated. In this training, we will look at why infection prevention and control in the human service environment is important and ways an organization can protect their Members and themselves, as well as ensure safe and healthy outcomes as Members transition across care settings.

Learning Objectives

At the completion of this training, the participant will be able to:

- Describe basic infection prevention principles.
- Discuss infection prevention measures in the behavioral health setting and for Members who are transitioning across levels of care.
- Demonstrate correct practices and infection prevention measures.

Key Words and Acronyms

Before we get started, we wanted to let you know that there are a number of key words and acronyms in this course that might be helpful. There is a list of these in the toolbox for your reference throughout the training.

Why Is Infection Prevention and Control Important?

The primary goal of infection prevention and control is to prevent infections that can occur within clinical settings or the human service environment. In many cases, this process will focus on eliminating risk factors that may result in Member-to-Member, Member-to-staff, staff-to-Member, or inter-staff infections. However, to successfully prevent infections, organizations must understand how the spread of infection occurs. While behavioral health programs focus on mental health and wellbeing, certain characteristics of these settings such as residential living, day treatment, or group therapy, etc. may make it easier for germs to be transmitted that might make you sick.

In addition, infection control is a crucial part of the NC Division of Health Service Regulation Standards (Licensure), CARF, Joint Commission, and Trillium Health Resources' accreditation processes. These organizations, in addition to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), and the North Carolina Department of Health & Human Services (NCDHHS), provide an abundance of guidance to support infection prevention and control.

It is important to be familiar with your agency's infection prevention and control policies and procedures and follow them in order to protect yourself and those with whom you work.

What is an Infection?

An infection is the invasion and growth of germs in the body. **Infections** can begin anywhere in the body and may spread all through it.

Have you ever wondered about how you acquired an infection?

Diseases and infections both require three distinct components for successful transmission. This includes a **source** from which the infection originates, a **susceptible person** the infection can enter, and a **transmission method** to transfer the infection. Often referred to as the **"chain of infection"**, once broken, the risk for potential infection can be eliminated. For this reason, identifying these factors and eliminating them is critical for limiting the spread of communicable diseases or infections.

Section One: The Chain of Infection

There are six links in the chain of infection.

- Infectious agent
- Reservoirs
- Portal of exit
- Means of transmission
- Portal of entry
- Susceptible host

Links in the Chain

Infectious Agent or "The Harmful Germ"

The first link in the chain of infection is the **infectious agent**. An infectious agent is a harmful germ that causes an infection. The harmful germ can be:

- bacteria,
- a virus,
- a fungus, or
- a parasite

Reservoir or "Hiding Places"

The second link in the chain of infection is the **reservoir**. The reservoir is the place where harmful germs live, grow, and increase in numbers. Think about it as a home for germs.

A reservoir or hiding place for harmful germs can be:

- A person
- An animal
- Dirt, water, or other places in the environment

When a reservoir is a person, some places where harmful germs may be living include:

- Blood
- Skin
- Digestive tract (mouth, stomach, or intestines) or

- Respiratory tract (nose, throat, or lungs)

Infected?

Can you look at a person and **always** tell if he has an infection that can be given to you, a co-worker, or another resident? The answer is **"NO, not always."**

When you think about people being reservoirs for harmful germs, all human beings belong in one of three groups:

- **Not infected:** The first group includes people who are well and are not being used as hiding places for harmful germs.
- **Infected:** The second group includes people who have the harmful germs, and the germs are making them sick. Because they are sick, you might be able to tell that these people have infections. You also may know that these people can infect you, your co-workers, and your Members.
- **Carriers:** The third group includes people who have the harmful germs living on or in their body, but the germs are not making them sick. Because they are not sick, you **do not know** they have infections. Carriers of an infection do not show symptoms of infection but can still infect others. A carrier of an infection can infect you, your co-workers, and your Members. These human reservoirs are being used as hiding places for harmful germs.

Think About

Think about infection in terms of an iceberg.

The people we know about who have infections and can infect you, your co-workers, and your Members are **only the tip of the iceberg.**

Think about all those large numbers of carriers of infection out there who we do not know about and who could possibly infect us!

Portals of Exit

Next, we talk about how harmful germs can get out from where they are living and spread to others.

The third link in the chain of infection is the portal of exit. The portal of exit can be any way that harmful germs escape from the reservoir (where they have been living).

Portals of Exit, or the way out.

Portals of Exit Include:

- Nose and mouth (allows harmful germs to leave in mucous droplets and saliva or spit)
- Gastrointestinal tract, or the 'gut' (allows harmful germs to leave in stool or vomit)
- Skin (allows harmful germs to leave through direct contact or in blood, pus, or other liquids that come from inside of the body)

Mode of Transmission or "I Get Around"

The fourth link in the chain of infection is the **mode of transmission.**

The mode of transmission is how the harmful germs travel or 'get around' from place to place.

There are two ways that harmful germs travel:

- Direct Contact
- Indirect Contact

Direct Contact

One way that harmful germs travel is by direct contact with body fluids where these germs live. These fluids include:

- Blood
- Sputum (mucous that is coughed up)
- Pus or wound fluid (from a cut or sore)
- Saliva (or spit)
- Stool (or bowel movement)
- Vomit

Direct contact includes:

- Needle sticks
- Contact with skin that has a rash, cuts, or scratches
- Splash or spray to the mucus membranes of the eyes, nose, and/or mouth

Indirect Contact

Indirect contact means that the harmful germs are spread by an object that has touched body fluids from an infected person. Infections can be spread by lots of

different objects such as dirty needles, instruments, or used bandages. They can be spread by the hands of family Members or caregivers who didn't practice good handwashing.

Some harmful germs can be spread or travel by way of **droplets.** Droplets are spread after being sprayed from the nose or mouth when the infected person sneezes, coughs, sighs, talks, or laughs. These droplets might land on another person (direct contact), or they might land on a doorknob, railing, or other surface that another person might touch (indirect contact).

Other Ways that Harmful Germs Get Around

Other ways that harmful germs get around:

- Through animal and insect bites. Harmful germs from a person or animal, which gets bitten, are then shared with a new person or animal that is bitten by the same animal or insect; and
- Through eating or drinking food or water that is infected with harmful germs.

One way a harmful germ travels

The number one way a harmful germ travels from place to place is by our hands. We get germs on our hands after coughing, sneezing, wiping our noses, or using the restroom and then we spread them to someone else or to an object that someone else might touch.

Portal of Entry or "The Way In"

The fifth link in the chain of infection is the **portal of entry.**

Portal of Entry or "The Way In"

The **portal of entry** is anybody opening on a person who does not have an infection that allows harmful germs to enter into the body.

Germs can usually get in the same way they got out, so the main portals of entry are the same as the portals of exit.

Portals of entry include:

- Nose and mouth (when the person breathes in harmful germs)
- Gastrointestinal tract, or the 'gut' (when the person eats food or drinks liquids that contain harmful germs)

- Any breaks in the skin (that allows harmful germs to get past the skin) such as:
    - Open sores
    - Cut
    - Needle stick
    - Cracked skin

Susceptible Host or "The Possible Next Infected Person"

The sixth in in the chain of infection is the **susceptible host.**

Susceptible Host or "The Possible Next Infected Person"

A susceptible host is a person who does not have an infection now but is at risk for becoming the next person to get infected from harmful germs.

A susceptible host is a person whose body for some reason cannot fight off an infection. Some reasons why a person's body cannot fight off an infection include:

- Age
- Stress
- Fatigue
- Poor nutrition
- Chronic illnesses
- Not having proper vaccinations
- Open cuts or skin breakdown

Section Two: Breaking the Chain of Infection

Two Levels of Precautions

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has developed a two-tiered (two level) way to prevent and control infections.

- Standard Precautions, and
- Transmission-Based Precautions (Isolation)

First Level - Standard Precautions

'Standard Precautions' is the first level of precaution used to prevent and control

infections. These are the basic tasks that providers must do when working with each and every Member in order to prevent and control the spread of infection. In this section, you will learn about ways to do things so that you can prevent and control the spread of infection.

Why must Standard Precautions be used with each and every Member? Because there are Members who have infections and you do not know they are infected. A Member may be infected who is not showing any signs or symptoms of being sick. Without using standard precautions, you can get the infection and pass it along to others.

We will talk about the following precautions that you should take such as:

- Handwashing or Hand Hygiene
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Handling Sharps
- Housekeeping - including,
    - Surface cleaning,
    - Spills,
    - Handling soiled linen, and
    - Waste Disposal

Handwashing/Hand Hygiene

Regular handwashing is one of the best ways to remove germs, avoid getting sick, and prevent the spread of germs to others. Hand hygiene is a term used to cover both hand washing using soap and water, and cleaning hands with waterless or alcohol-based hand sanitizers.

As we talked about in Section One, germs can spread from other people or surfaces when you:

- Touch your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- Prepare or eat food and drinks with unwashed hands
- Touch a contaminated surface or objects
- Blow your nose, cough, or sneeze into hands and then touch other people's hands or common objects

You can help yourself and others stay healthy by washing your hands often, especially during these key times when you are likely to get and spread germs:

- **Before, during,** and **after** preparing food
- **Before** and **after** eating food
- **Before** and **after** caring for someone who is sick with vomiting or diarrhea
- **Before** and **after** treating a cut or wound
- **After** using the toilet
- **After** changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet
- **After** blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- **After** touching garbage or cleaning up a spill
- **After you smoke**
- **Before you leave work, and**
- **After you get home from work (before you touch anybody or anything)**

Five Steps

Washing your hands is easy, and it's one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of germs. Clean hands can stop germs from spreading from one person to another and throughout an entire community.

Follow these five steps every time.

1. Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
2. Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
3. Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds. *Need a timer? Hum the "Happy Birthday" song from beginning to end twice.*
4. Rinse your hands well under clean, running water.
5. Dry your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

Video CDC Fight Germs! Wash Your Hands

https://www.youtube-nocookie.com/embed/eZw4Ga3jg3E

Use Hand Sanitizer When You Can't Use Soap and Water

You can use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.

Washing hands with soap and water is the best way to get rid of germs in most situations. If soap and water are not readily available, you can use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. You can tell if the sanitizer contains at least 60% alcohol by looking at the product label.

Sanitizers can quickly reduce the number of germs on hands in many situations. However,

- Sanitizers do not get rid of all types of germs.
- Hand sanitizers may not be as effective when hands are visibly dirty or greasy.
- Hand sanitizers might not remove harmful chemicals from hands like pesticides and heavy metals.

When using alcohol-based hand sanitizer:

- Put product on hands and rub hands together
- Cover all surfaces until your hands feel dry
- This should take around 20 seconds

Washing Your Hands

Washing your hands is the single most important thing you can do to prevent the spread of infection!

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is protective clothing or equipment designed to protect the wearer's body from injury, illness, or infection.

When used properly, PPE acts as a barrier between infectious materials such as viral and bacterial contaminants and your skin, mouth, nose, or eyes (mucous membranes).

The barrier has the potential to block transmission of contaminants from blood, body fluids, or respiratory secretions. PPE may also protect Members who are at high risk for contracting infections from being exposed to germs brought in by visitors and treatment providers.

When used properly and with other infection control practices such as hand-washing, using alcohol-based hand sanitizers, and covering coughs and sneezes, PPE minimizes the spread of infection from one person to another.

PPE includes:

- **Gloves** - Protect hands from germs and reduce the spread of germs.
- **Gowns** - Protect clothing and skin from contamination and reduce the spread of germs.
- **Goggles/Face Shields** - Protect mucous membranes from blood and bodily fluids.
- **Masks** - Protect respiratory tract from infectious agents and prevent the spread of germs from nose and mouth.

Effective Use of PPE

Effective use of PPE includes:

- properly applying (donning)
- removing (doffing)
- disposing of contaminated PPE

to prevent exposing both the wearer and other people to infection.

Videos

Donning/Doffing Gloves

https://www.youtube-nocookie.com/embed/xueBYfElFEg

Donning/Doffing Facial Protection with Face Shield

https://www.youtube-nocookie.com/embed/beejIQmIoMY

Donning/Doffing Facial Protection

https://www.youtube-nocookie.com/embed/OABvzuge-hw

Donning/Doffing Isolation Gown

https://www.youtube-nocookie.com/embed/6OVMetPK090

Handling Sharps

Wear gloves and be careful when using or handling anything that is sharp such as:

- Razors
- Needles from injections
- Diabetic testing equipment
- Anything else that is sharp that could have touched blood or body fluids.

Always put anything sharp that has been used in a biohazard container (sharps container).

Never stick your hand or fingers in a sharps container or try to cram 'one more needle' in the sharps container.

Never re-cap a needle.

Never put anything sharp in a regular trashcan.

Housekeeping

A clean environment is important in the prevention of infection. It is important to know your agency's cleaning policies and procedures and adhere to them.

Surfaces

- Clean surfaces regularly and per policy. For residential settings and Member areas, use the type of disinfectant per policy and per directions of the product. Clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces more often including doorknobs, hand rails, light switches, and bathrooms.

Spills

- Clean up spills based on the infection control policy of your agency
- Absorb the spill and clean with correct product
- Discard waste in the appropriate container
- Place a warning cone or sign to warn others of the wet surface

Soiled linen

- Wear gloves when in contact with dirty linen or other items
- Carry soiled linen or items away from your clothes
- Do not shake dirty linen

Waste Disposal

- Plain trash that does not have any blood or body fluids on it can be thrown away in the regular trashcan
- Trash (things meant to be thrown away) with blood, body fluids should be thrown away in a special biohazard waste bag. Check your agency's policies to identify and locate these bags.

Second Level - Transmission-Based Precautions

Transmission-Based Precautions are the second tier of basic infection control and are to be used in addition to Standard Precautions for patients who may be infected or colonized with certain infectious agents for which additional precautions are needed to prevent infection transmission.

The three types of transmission-based precautions include:

- Airborne,
- Contact, and
- Droplet Precautions

Airborne Diseases

You can catch some diseases simply by breathing. These are called airborne diseases.

Airborne disease can spread when people with certain infections cough, sneeze, or talk, spewing nasal and throat secretions into the air. Some viruses or bacteria take flight and hang in the air or land on other people or surfaces.

When you breathe in airborne pathogenic organisms, they take up residence inside you. You can also pick up germs when you touch a surface that harbors them, and then touch your own eyes, nose, or mouth.

Because these diseases travel in the air, they're hard to control. Airborne disease spreads easily in close quarters, such as schools and nursing homes. Large outbreaks tend to occur under crowded conditions and in places where hygiene and sanitation systems are poor.

Most airborne diseases run their course within a few weeks. Others, like whooping cough, can last for months.

Serious complications and longer recovery time are more likely if you have a weakened immune system or if you don't have access to good medical care. In some cases, airborne diseases can be fatal.

Airborne Diseases

Airborne Diseases include:

- Coronavirus, COVID-19
- The Common Cold
- Influenza
- Chickenpox
- Mumps
- Measles
- Whooping Cough (Pertussis)
- Tuberculosis (TB)

Airborne Precautions are required to protect against airborne transmission of infectious agents and include:

- Use of standard precautions.
- Avoid close contact with people who have active symptoms of disease.
- Stay home when you're sick. Don't let vulnerable people come in close contact with you.
- If you must be around others, wear a face mask to prevent spreading or breathing in germs.
- Cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze. Use a tissue or your elbow to cut down on the possibility of transmitting germs on your hands.
- Wash your hands thoroughly (at least 20 seconds) and often, especially after sneezing or coughing.
- Avoid touching your face or other people with unwashed hands.
- Vaccines can reduce your chances of getting some airborne diseases.

Some diseases such as COVID-19, Measles, and Tuberculosis are more complex and require personal respiratory protection and special ventilation and air handling.

TB

While there is a section on COVID-19 that will follow, it is also important to talk about Tuberculosis (TB).

Tuberculosis is caused by bacteria that spread from person to person through microscopic droplets released into the air. This can happen when someone with the untreated, active form of tuberculosis coughs, speaks, sneezes, spits, laughs, or sings.

Although tuberculosis is contagious, it's not easy to catch. You're much more likely to get tuberculosis from someone you live or work with than from a stranger. Most people with active TB who've had appropriate drug treatment for at least two weeks are no longer contagious.

Since the 1980s, tuberculosis cases have increased dramatically because of the spread of HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. HIV suppresses the immune system, making it difficult for the body to control TB bacteria. As a result, people with HIV are much more likely to get TB than are people who aren't HIV positive.

Anyone can get tuberculosis, but certain factors can increase your risk, including:

- Using substances -- IV drugs or excessive alcohol use weakens your immune system and makes you more vulnerable to tuberculosis.
- Using tobacco -- Tobacco use greatly increases the risk of getting TB and dying of it.
- Working in health care -- Regular contact with people who are ill increases your chances of exposure to TB bacteria. Wearing a mask and frequent hand-washing greatly reduce your risk.
- Living or working in a residential care facility -- People who live or work in prisons, homeless shelters, psychiatric hospitals, or nursing homes are all at a higher risk of tuberculosis due to overcrowding and poor ventilation.
- Living with someone infected with TB -- Close contact with someone who has TB increases your risk.

If you suspect that an individual may have TB, follow your agency's reporting policy and procedure to connect that individual to appropriate care.

Contact Precautions

Contact precautions are used when a person has a type of bacteria or virus on the skin or in a sore, or elsewhere in the body, such as the intestine, that can be transmitted to someone else if that person touches the infected individual or contaminated surfaces or

equipment near the infected individual.

Examples of bacteria and viruses that can be transmitted to others include methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA), Salmonella, Clostridium difficile, and some of the hepatitis viruses.

In addition to following **standard precautions**, staff and visitors should be wearing a gown and gloves whenever they are in the room. Care providers should be putting the gown and gloves on as they enter the room and removing the gown and gloves as they leave the room. They should also be washing their hands before they put on the gown and gloves when they come into the room, and as they leave the room. The people who come in to clean the room and provide other services should also be wearing a gown and gloves.

Droplet Precautions

Certain germs can be spread by droplets that come out of the mouth during talking or coughing or from drainage from the nose. These droplets may be big enough to see or too small to be seen.

Diseases requiring droplet precautions include, but are not limited to: Pertussis, Influenza, Diphtheria and Meningitis.

Droplet Precautions include, in addition to **standard precautions,** wearing a facemask for close contact with the individual (within 3 feet of the person) and the facemask should be donned upon entering the room or Member's space.

A common question is what is the difference between droplet and airborne? Droplet transmission consists of exposure to larger droplets, smaller droplets, and particles when an individual is close to an infected person. Airborne transmission consists of exposure to smaller droplets and particles at greater distances or over longer times.

Quick Review

We have covered a lot of material! Please click on the link below for a quick review.

https://www.youtube.com/embed/eDH1M8gPOAw

Section Three: Bloodborne Pathogens and COVID-19

Section Three: Bloodborne Pathogens and COVID-19

Bloodborne Pathogens

Bloodborne Pathogens are harmful germs that are found in human blood and body

fluids that can cause infection and disease. The three most common bloodborne pathogens are:

- Hepatitis B (HBV)
- Hepatitis C (HCV)
- Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)

Individuals can become infected by:

- Sharing contaminated needles
- Direct contact with blood or other body fluids from an infected person

An **exposure** occurs when any person has a needlestick or cut with a sharp object or contact of mucous membrane or non-intact (chapped or open wound) skin with another person's blood, tissue or other body fluids that are potentially infectious.

Potentially infectious blood and body fluids include:

- fluids containing visible blood
- semen
- vaginal secretions
- amniotic fluid
- saliva during a dental procedure
- all body fluids in situations where it is difficult or impossible to differentiate between body fluids

Unless visible blood is present, the following body fluids are **NOT** considered to be potentially infectious:

- Feces
- nasal secretions
- saliva
- sweat
- tears
- urine
- vomit

Bloodborne Pathogens

Let's look closer at the three most common bloodborne pathogens:

- **Hepatitis B (HBV)**
    - A contagious liver disease caused by the hepatitis B virus (HBV) usually spread when blood, semen, or another body fluid from a person infected with HBV enters the body of someone who is not infected. This can happen through sexual contact, sharing needles, syringes, or other drug-injection equipment - even fingerstick devices or blood sugar monitors.
    - HBV can live outside the body on equipment and on surfaces like table tops for an extended period of time if not disinfected.
    - About 1/3 of people infected with HBV do not show symptoms and HBV infection can lead to chronic infections - a long-term illness that can result in long-term health problems and even death.
    - There is a Hepatitis B vaccine available to prevent you and others from getting this disease.
- **Hepatitis C (HCV)**
    - Hepatitis C (HCV) is a contagious liver disease spread by blood or body fluids. HCV is usually spread when blood from an infected person enters the body of someone who is not infected.
    - HCV ranges in severity from a mild illness lasting a few weeks to a serious, lifelong illness that attacks the liver.
    - There is no vaccine to protect against HCV infection.
- **Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)**
    - HIV is the virus that can cause Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). HIV attacks the immune system and limits the body's ability to fight infection.

You should also be aware of **Hepatitis A,** a vaccine-preventable liver infection caused by the hepatitis A virus (HAV). HAV is found in the stool and blood of people who are infected. Hepatitis A is very contagious. It is spread when someone unknowingly ingests the virus - even in microscopic amounts - through close personal contact with an infected person or through eating contaminated food or drink. Symptoms of hepatitis A can last up to 2 months and include fatigue, nausea, stomach pain, and jaundice. Most people with hepatitis A do not have long-lasting illness. The best way to prevent hepatitis A is to get vaccinated.

Hepatitis A is transmitted through the fecal-oral route. This can happen through:

- Close person-to-person contact with an infected person
- Sexual contact with an infected person
- Ingestion of contaminated food or water

According to the CDC, current data indicate that bloodborne transmission of hepatitis A virus is uncommon.

How Do I Protect Myself and Others?

Follow standard precautions to help prevent the spread of bloodborne pathogens and other diseases whenever there is a risk of exposure to blood or other body fluids.

These precautions require that all blood and other body fluids be treated as if they are infectious.

Standard Precautions include personal protective equipment, such as gloves, gowns, masks, eye protection (e.g., goggles), and face shields to protect individuals from exposure to blood and body fluids.

What if I get stuck?

Needlestick injuries are unfortunately, a common occupational hazard. A quick and appropriate response to a needlestick injury can greatly decrease the risk of disease transmission following an exposure to potentially infectious materials.

After any needlestick injury, an affected healthcare worker should wash the area with soap and water immediately.

As decisions for post-exposure treatment often need to be made within hours, you should contact your supervisor or administrative representative immediately. Staff should always be encouraged and supported to report all sharps-related injuries to such departments.

It is important to be familiar with your Infection Prevention and Control Policy and Procedures for situations such as these.

COVID-19

COVID-19 is a respiratory disease caused by a new coronavirus discovered in 2019. The virus is thought to spread mainly from person to person through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks. Some people who are infected may not have symptoms. For people who do have symptoms, illness can range

from mild to severe.

People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported - ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear **2-14 days after exposure to the virus.** People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath-difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea
-

This list may not include all possible symptoms. CDC continues to update this list as they learn more about COVID-19. To access the most current information on COVID-19, please click the link to visit the CDC website. Trillium's COVID-19 policy adheres to the CDC guidelines.

Adults 65 years and older and people of any age with underlying medical conditions are at higher risk for severe illness.

When to seek emergency medical attention:

Look for emergency warning signs* for COVID-19. If someone is showing any of these signs, seek emergency medical care immediately:

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion
- Inability to wake or stay awake
- Pale, gray, or blue-colored skin, lips, or nail beds, depending on skin tone

-

*This list is not all possible symptoms. Please call your or the Member's medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning.

Call 911 or call ahead to your local emergency facility: Notify the operator that you are seeking care for someone who has or may have COVID-19.

How to Protect Yourself and Others

- Wear a mask that covers your nose and mouth to help protect yourself and others.
- Stay 6 feet apart from others who don't live with you.
- Get a COVID-19 vaccine when it is available to you.
- Avoid crowds and poorly ventilated indoor spaces.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water. Use hand sanitizer if soap and water aren't available.

In addition, as you work with others:

Cover your coughs and sneezes

- Remember to cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow. Throw used tissues into no-touch trash cans and immediately wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

Avoid sharing objects and equipment

- Avoid using other employees' phones, desks, offices, or other work tools and equipment, when possible. If you cannot avoid using someone else's workstation, clean and disinfect before and after use.

Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces

- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces, like workstations, keyboards, telephones, handrails, and doorknobs. Dirty surfaces can be cleaned with soap and water before disinfection.

Thank you for completing this training!

Resources:

- CDC Infection Prevention and Control Website https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/index.html

- Free CDC Infection and Prevention Control Continuing Education Series https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/training/cme-info.html
- SAMHSA Prevention and Infection Control Resources https://www.samhsa.gov/coronavirus
- North Carolina Division of Health Service Regulation Infection Control Resources & Training https://info.ncdhhs.gov/dhsr/acls/training/index.html
- North Carolina COVID-19 Information Hub https://www.nc.gov/covid19