



## Home Care Guidance for Tele-Health

Caregivers are an essential part of clients' health care team, and our work is more important now than ever.

The Department of Social and Health Services shared guidance this week for providing safe care during the COVID-19 outbreak. **You should limit face-to-face time with clients by doing certain tasks over the phone or outside of the client's home whenever possible.** We know all circumstances are different, and some clients won't respond to support by phone. But when possible, face-to-face time should be limited to tasks that can only be provided in person (unless you and your client live in the same home).

See below or [visit DSHS](#) for a list of tasks that can now be done by phone or remotely, and which tasks can only be provided in person. If you work for a private home care agency consult with your agency supervisor before doing tasks by phone or remotely.

If you're healthy, the state is encouraging providers to continue providing care to your clients. If you're sick, don't work! Call your client and their case manager so alternate care can be found. You could potentially qualify for unemployment.

### Tips for reducing exposure and spread

Before each visit with your client, call ahead and ask if they are experiencing a fever or new or worsening cough or shortness of breath. If they are, consider whether you can perform your care tasks remotely. If not, take precautions:

- Perform hand hygiene before and after your visit, preparing food, and toileting. Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol.
- Disinfect frequently touched surfaces such as kitchen counters, dining tables, other tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, phones, keyboards and remotes at the beginning and end of every shift.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Stay at least six feet away from your client and others as much as possible. Limit close personal contact to necessary personal care.
- Avoid touching surfaces or objects within the home as much as possible.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue and discard after each use. If you do not have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your sleeve. Ask your client to do the same.

### Some personal care tasks can be done by phone or other technology include:

- Medication reminders (including checking on medication supply)
- Supervision/reminders for:
  - Bathing & personal hygiene
  - Eating (if no swallowing issues exist)
  - Dressing (such as reminders to change into clean clothes, wearing weather appropriate clothing, etc.)
- Treatment reminders, including:
  - Blood glucose monitoring and insulin injections
  - Nebulizer
  - Active range of motion



- Toileting program
- Behavior interventions and de-escalation techniques
- Appointment reminders
- Wellness checks and reassurance calls

**Personal care tasks that may be completed outside of the home without the client include:**

- Meal preparation and delivery of food
- Essential shopping/errands
- Laundry (such as using laundry facilities, family's laundry area, etc.)
- Wood supply

**Personal care tasks that can only be conducted in-person include:**

- Medication administration
- Turning & repositioning/bed mobility
- Transfers & ambulation
- Bathing & personal hygiene
- Eating
- Toilet use
- Dressing
- Essential housework