

Providing Comfort at a Facility for COVID19 Infection

In this time of stress, here are a few ideas for providing comfort to your residents who are sick with a respiratory illness or COVID and living in your community. What you're doing is difficult; take care of yourself and your staff as best you can.

If a resident of yours is having difficulty breathing, a painful cough, or otherwise severe symptoms, reach out to their primary care provider for stronger medications that can help with these more severe symptoms.

For cough

- Honey directly off a spoon soothes an irritated throat and cough.
- Warm tea with honey and lemon helps hydrate and keep mucus looser.
- Keep head and chest elevated on pillows when in bed. Try to change positions every hour or so, including sitting your resident into a chair, and walking around the room if possible.

For more serious breathlessness

- Use oxygen (no higher than 4 liters/min) if you have it.
- Opioid pain medications relieve air hunger. Contact the resident's PCP for dosing instructions.
- Continue any routine diuretic medicine as long the resident can swallow pills.
- Sedative medications can relieve fear and anxiety.
- Raise the head and chest to at least a 30 degree angle.
- Use the "rescue position" illustrated on the back for someone who seems to be gagging on secretions. Drying medications can relieve rattling sounds.

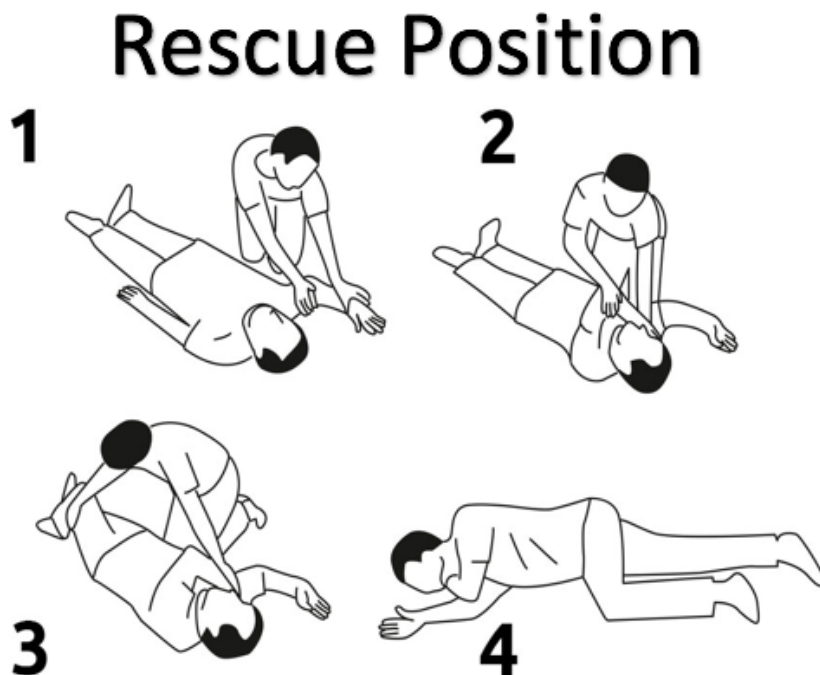
Protect yourself from also becoming infected

- Anyone who is coughing in the room should wear a surgical mask if available. If not available, a bandana tied around the lower face (over the nose and mouth) also blocks secretions. Replace them with clean masks when they become moist. Keeping a mask on your face may help you avoid touching your own face.

- Nebulizers, high flow oxygen and fans may increase risk of infection. Discuss stopping these treatments with the PCP.
- Wipe down frequently touched surfaces with bleach wipes or alcohol wipes at least daily – more frequently is better.
- Avoid touching your own face unless you have just washed your hands thoroughly.
- Highly encourage that all staff keep sleeves short (above the elbow) and to remove all rings, bracelets, scarves and any other dangling clothing or jewelry.
- Try to get enough rest. Eat well and stay hydrated. Try to get some daily exercise and time outdoors.

Create a soothing environment

- Stay informed, but avoid having the news on all the time. Excess news makes us anxious, so choose nature shows and movies for TVs in resident rooms.
- Dimmer lighting, peaceful music, aromatherapy and less background noise when resting is needed.
- Distraction can be great for your staff and our residents when bored or worried. Try to find activities that create connection. Pull out old photo albums to look at with residents, read aloud from favorite books, and listen to music.



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