

State of Maryland

**Maryland
Institute for
Emergency Medical
Services Systems**

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To: EMS Operational Programs

From: Timothy Chizmar, MD, FACEP
State EMS Medical Director

Date: March 17, 2020

RE: Viral Syndrome Pandemic Triage Protocol – Emergency Protocol

This emergency protocol is being issued by the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems, after approval by the Executive Director of MIEMSS and the Chairman of the State Emergency Medical Services Board, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and in accordance with Education Article Section 13-516(d)(1) and COMAR 30.03.05.02(I) and a catastrophic health emergency proclamation.

The protocol is available for immediate implementation. Please notify the Office of the Medical Director (chyzer@miemss.org) if your jurisdiction plans to utilize this protocol.

Please direct any questions regarding this protocol to the Office of the Medical Director.

Enclosures (3):

Viral Syndrome Pandemic Triage Protocol
Administrative Guidance
Viral Syndrome Pandemic Instructions

Maryland Institute *for* Emergency Medical Services Systems
Administrative Guidance

Viral Syndrome Pandemic Triage Protocol Implementation

Purpose

To provide guidance for EMS Operational Programs (EMSOPs) that plan to implement the Viral Syndrome Pandemic Triage Protocol.

Background

A global pandemic due to a novel coronavirus (COVID-19) has precipitated a surge in calls for emergency medical services (EMS) related to viral syndromes. On March 5, 2020, Governor Hogan declared a state of emergency in response to the first documented cases in Maryland. Furthermore, COVID-19 will continue to cause continued high volumes of calls for service from EMS and concurrent absenteeism in the EMS workforce for weeks to months.

With anticipated unprecedented patient volumes for EMS and Maryland hospitals, it is necessary to implement a protocol that assists EMS clinicians in identifying patients that may be appropriate to care for themselves safely at home, without transport to an emergency department. Therefore, the Executive Director of MIEMSS and the Chairman of the Maryland EMS Board issued this emergency protocol under their authority in Education Article Section 13-516(d)(1) and COMAR 30.03.05.02(I).


Process

- 1) The EMSOP shall insert any local guidance or specific resource information (e.g., local health department phone number, local urgent care information, etc.) within the Viral Infection Home Care Instructions
 - a. Local information shall be inserted on page two of the Word document, where indicated.
 - b. The instructions shall be printed as a two-sided document

- 2) The EMSOP shall provide EMS Clinicians with copies of the following:
 - a. Viral Syndrome Pandemic Triage Protocol
 - b. Viral Infection Home Care Instructions (a double-sided copy; provided to patients who are not transported by EMS)

- 3) The Viral Syndrome Pandemic Triage protocol may be used by ALS or BLS clinicians for appropriate patients. It should be in-hand and completed for each relevant patient. If the patient does not meet viral syndrome criteria, the EMS clinician shall refer to the appropriate treatment protocol in the *Maryland Medical Protocols for EMS*.
- 4) The EMS clinician shall document every use of the protocol under the COVID-19 tab in eMEDS.
- 5) The EMSOP should develop a process to make a follow-up phone call or visit within 24 hours for every patient who is not transported to the ED using this protocol. Follow-up calls or visits should be documented under "Call Type: Mobile Integrated Health", COVID-19 follow-up = Yes.
- 6) The EMSOP shall provide education to all EMS clinicians on the appropriate application of this protocol.

Approved:

 _____ March 17, 2020

Theodore R. Delbridge, MD, MPH
Executive Director



Viral Syndrome Pandemic Triage Protocol



EFFECTIVE March 17, 2020 until rescinded or superceded

For Use By BLS and ALS Clinicians

YES

NO

Patient age is between 2 and 55 years

Patient has a suspected viral syndrome with at least two (2) of the following symptoms:
fever, cough, body aches, or sore throat

Patient has a history of immunosuppression, or is taking medicines that depress the immune system (cancer undergoing chemotherapy, transplant patient, HIV, etc.)

Patient has a history of diabetes

Patient has a history of heart disease

Patient has a history of COPD or lung disease

Patient has a heart rate between : 50 - 110 bpm (age 13-55 years);
(age 2-5 years: 80-140 bpm; age 6-12 years: 70-120 bpm)

Patient has a systolic blood pressure between: 110-180 mmHg (age 13-55 years);
(age 2-5 years: > 80mmHg; age 6-12 years: > 90mmHg)

Oxygen saturation (SpO2) greater than or equal to 94%

Clear lung sounds

Respiratory rate between 12 - 22 breaths per minute, and the patient does not complain of shortness of breath

Patient is able to ambulate without difficulty

Patient is agreeable to home self-care

ANY CHECKS in a shaded box indicate that patient transport should be encouraged.

If **ALL** CHECKS are in non-shaded boxes, patient may provide self-care at home.
Refer to no-transport instructions for patients.

Any patient may be transported at the EMS Clinician's discretion.

Viral Infection

Home Care Instructions

Emergency Medical Services evaluated you today for an apparent viral respiratory infection (e.g., influenza, COVID-19, and other common respiratory viruses). At this time your illness does not require you to go to an emergency department. Your vital signs are within acceptable ranges, including your heart rate, breathing rate, blood pressure, and oxygen level.

It is important that you continue to treat your symptoms, monitor your own condition, and take steps to prevent spreading the infection to others.

You should follow the steps below:

- **Stay home except to get medical care.** Do not go to work, school, or public areas. Avoid using public transportation, ride-sharing, or taxis.
- **Drink plenty of fluids** to stay very well-hydrated. Drink non-carbonated fluids. Avoid alcohol.
- **Take ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil) or acetaminophen (Tylenol) as needed for fever or body aches, unless you have previously been told not to use these medicines.** For adults, the recommended dose for ibuprofen is 400 or 600 mg every 6 hours, and for acetaminophen the dose is 650 mg every 4 hours. For children, consult medication packaging for appropriate weight-based dosing.
- **Separate yourself from other people and animals in your home.**
 - As much as possible, stay in a specific room and away from other people in your home. Use a separate bathroom, if available.
- **If you need follow-up care, call your healthcare provider before going there.** Call your healthcare provider and tell them that you have or may have the flu, COVID-19, or similar respiratory illness. Advise your healthcare provider that you called 911 and were screened by EMS and told at that time that you may remain at home. Your health care provider may arrange a follow-up visit with you in person or via telehealth. Alerting your health care provider in this way will help the healthcare provider's office take steps to keep other people from getting infected or exposed.
- **Wear a facemask,** if you have one, when you are around other people (e.g., sharing a room or vehicle) or pets and before you enter a healthcare provider's office.
- **Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue then throw the tissue in the trash.**
- **Clean your hands often.** Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.
- **Avoid sharing personal household items,** such as dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils towels, or bedding with other people or pets. After using, wash them thoroughly.
- **Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces** using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.

[Link to MS Word Version](#)

Monitor your symptoms

If you are in any way worsening, please seek care by contacting your doctor, going to an urgent care center, or going to your nearest emergency department for further evaluation and treatment of your condition. This could include, but is not limited to:

- High or persistent fevers, vomiting, trouble breathing or shortness of breath, coughing up blood, severe headaches, neck pain/stiffness, or any new or worsening symptoms or concerns.
- If you are unable to walk or you are experiencing shortness of breath that limits your ability to go by private car, please call 9-1-1.

Before seeking care, call your healthcare provider, if possible, and tell them that you have a respiratory infection. Put on a facemask before you enter the facility.

If you have a medical emergency and need to call 9-1-1, notify the operator that you have a respiratory infection and EMS has responded once to you regarding your symptoms. They advised to call back if my condition worsened. If possible, put on a facemask before EMS arrives.

Discontinuing home isolation

If your doctor or local health department advises you to remain on home isolation precautions, please contact them for advice for when it is appropriate to discontinue this and resume normal daily activities.

If you have not been advised about home isolation precautions by your doctor or local health department, please stay home when you are sick and until there is no fever for a minimum of 24 hours without medicine like Tylenol, Motrin, or Advil.

[INSERT ADDITIONAL LOCAL RESOURCES HERE]

Recommendations related to coronavirus may change over time. Please check the CDC website for updates on home quarantine, preventing disease spread, and treatment:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/index.html>

Telehealth Resources to consider:

- a. LiveHealth Online <https://livehealthonline.com/> (Blue Cross)
- b. Teladoc <https://www.aetna.com/services/telehealth.html> (Aetna)
- c. KPNow <https://my.kp.org/shbp/kp-now-telemedicine-appointment/> (Kaiser)
- d. Cigna Telehealth <https://www.cigna.com/individuals-families/member-resources/telehealth-connection-program> (Cigna)

Infección viral

Instrucciones para el cuidado en casa

Los Servicios Médicos de Emergencia lo(a) evaluaron hoy por una aparente infección respiratoria viral (por ejemplo, influenza, COVID-19, y otros virus respiratorios comunes). En este momento su enfermedad no requiere que vaya a un departamento de emergencia. Sus signos vitales están dentro de los rangos aceptables, incluyendo su ritmo cardíaco, ritmo respiratorio, presión arterial y nivel de oxígeno.

Es importante que continúe tratando sus síntomas, supervisando su propia condición y tomando medidas para prevenir la propagación de la infección a otros.

Debe seguir los siguientes pasos:

- **Quédese en casa, excepto para recibir atención médica.** No vaya al trabajo, a la escuela o a las áreas públicas. Evite usar el transporte público, los viajes compartidos o los taxis.
- **Beba mucho líquido** para mantenerse muy bien hidratado. Beba líquidos sin gas. Evite el alcohol.
- **Tome ibuprofeno (Motrin, Advil) o paracetamol (Tylenol) según sea necesario para la fiebre o los dolores corporales, a menos que le hayan dicho previamente que no use estos medicamentos.** Para los adultos, la dosis recomendada de ibuprofeno es de 400 o 600 mg cada 6 horas, y la de acetaminofeno es de 650 mg cada 4 horas. En el caso de los niños, consulte los envases de los medicamentos para obtener la dosis adecuada en función del peso.
- **Sepárese de otras personas y animales en su casa.**
 - En la medida de lo posible, quédese en una habitación específica y lejos de otras personas en su casa. Use un baño separado, si está disponible.
- **Si necesita cuidados de seguimiento, llame a su proveedor de atención médica antes de ir allí.** Llame a su proveedor de atención médica y dígame que tiene o puede tener la gripe, COVID-19, o una enfermedad respiratoria similar. Informe a su proveedor de atención médica que llamó al 911 y que fue examinado por el servicio médico de emergencia y le dijeron en ese momento que puede permanecer en su casa. Su proveedor de atención médica puede concertar una visita de seguimiento con usted en persona o a través de la telesalud. Alertar a su proveedor de atención médica de esta manera ayudará al consultorio del proveedor de atención médica a tomar medidas para evitar que otras personas se infecten o se expongan.
- **Use una mascarilla,** si la tiene, cuando esté cerca de otras personas (por ejemplo, compartiendo una habitación o un vehículo) o mascotas y antes de entrar al consultorio del proveedor de atención médica.
- **Cubra su tos y estornudos con un pañuelo desechable y luego arroje el pañuelo a la basura.**
- **Lávese las manos a menudo.** Lávese las manos a menudo con agua y jabón durante al menos 20 segundos, especialmente después de ir al baño, antes de comer y después de sonarse la nariz, toser o estornudar. Si no se dispone de agua y jabón, utilice un desinfectante para manos a base de alcohol con al menos un 60% de alcohol. Siempre lávese las manos con agua y jabón si las manos están visiblemente sucias.

[Enlace a la versión de MS Word / Link to MS Word Version](#)

- **Evite compartir artículos personales de la casa**, como platos, vasos, tazas, utensilios para comer, toallas o ropa de cama con otras personas o mascotas. Después de usarlos, lávelos bien.
- **Limpie y desinfecte los objetos y superficies** que se tocan con frecuencia usando un aerosol o una toallita de limpieza doméstica común.

Vigile sus síntomas

Si está empeorando de alguna manera, por favor busque atención médica comunicándose con su médico, acudiendo a un centro de atención urgente o yendo al departamento de emergencias más cercano para una mayor evaluación y tratamiento de su condición. Esto podría incluir, entre otras cosas:

- Fiebres altas o persistentes, vómito, problemas para respirar o falta de aliento, tos con sangre, fuertes dolores de cabeza, dolor o rigidez en el cuello, o cualquier síntoma o preocupación nueva o que empeore.
- Si no puede caminar o está experimentando falta de aliento que limita su capacidad para ir en coche privado, por favor llame al 9-1-1.

Antes de buscar atención médica, llame a su médico, si es posible, y dígame que tiene una infección respiratoria. Póngase una mascarilla antes de entrar en el centro.

Si tiene una emergencia médica y necesita llamar al 9-1-1, notifique a la operadora que tiene una infección respiratoria y que EMS le ha respondido una vez con respecto a sus síntomas. Me aconsejaron que llamara de nuevo si mi condición empeoraba. Si es posible, póngase una mascarilla antes de que llegue el servicio de emergencias.

Descontinuar el aislamiento en el hogar

Si su médico o el departamento de salud local le aconsejan que siga tomando precauciones de aislamiento en el hogar, por favor comuníquese con ellos para que le aconsejen cuándo es apropiado interrumpirlo y reanudar las actividades diarias normales.

Si su médico o el departamento de salud local no le han aconsejado sobre las precauciones de aislamiento en el hogar, por favor permanezca en casa cuando esté enfermo y hasta que no haya fiebre durante un mínimo de 24 horas sin medicamentos como Tylenol, Motrin o Advil.

[INSERT ADDITIONAL LOCAL RESOURCES HERE/ INSERTAR RECURSOS LOCALES ADICIONALES AQUÍ]

Las recomendaciones relacionadas con el coronavirus pueden cambiar con el tiempo. Por favor, consulte el sitio web de los Centros para el Control y la Prevención de Enfermedades (CDC) para obtener información actualizada sobre la cuarentena domiciliaria, la prevención de la propagación de la enfermedad y el tratamiento.:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/index.html>

Recursos de telesalud que se deben tener en cuenta:

- a. LiveHealth Online <https://livehealthonline.com/> (Blue Cross)
- b. Teladoc <https://www.aetna.com/services/telehealth.html> (Aetna)
- c. KPNow <https://my.kp.org/shbp/kp-now-telemedicine-appointment/> (Kaiser)
- d. Cigna Telehealth <https://www.cigna.com/individuals-families/member-resources/telehealth-connection-program> (Cigna)