

Providing symptom support for a client with suspected or confirmed COVID

Here are some suggestions that may provide client comfort and symptom relief *this tool is not intended to diagnose or treat any disease or other conditions including COVID-19

- Promote hydration by encouraging client to sip on plenty of clear liquids while awake to prevent dehydration. Preferably warm liquids as they help loosen secretions and bring up phlegm.
- If the client is experiencing a fever, consult with their primary care provider or a medical professional as to how and when to treat the fever medically. TIPS to help reduce the fever without medications.
 - ~ Place a cool, wet cloth folded length wise across the forehead, neck or in the groin to help provide comfort and decrease the fever. Repeat when the washcloth warms up.
 - ~ If tolerated, a lukewarm bath can help to slowly decrease the fever.
- If the client is experiencing a fever accompanied with nausea and/or vomiting or decreased appetite, it is encouraged that the client slow down eating until feeling well enough to digest food properly. Eating at this time can waste the body's energy on digestion when that energy is needed to control the infection causing the fever. If the client is able to eat without difficulty, encourage foods that promote hydration: berries, watermelon, oranges & cantaloupe, etc. Avoid fatty, oily, spicy or fried foods. Ensure to follow clients dietary plan. Inform the client's doctor if vomiting and/or diarrhea occur.
- Using a humidifier can be helpful if available or if not, assist client to sit in a warm shower or bath if needed. A warm, wet washcloth can be placed loosely over the nose and mouth, then breathe deeply. The warm, moist air helps to loosen respiratory secretions and mucus.
- With respiratory congestion and/or pneumonia, try to encourage the client to practice slow, deep breathing. This can be done by inhaling slowly and deeply, followed by a slow and long exhale, attempting this 5-10 times every hour while awake. This is an important step to help keep the lungs open and prevent and/or treat pneumonia.

- If able, gargle with salt water or even just warm water. The salt in the water helps provide relief by acting like a magnet to water by pulling fluids from the throat area, helping to get rid of some of the mucus by washing the virus out and relieve irritation.
- Assist client to sit upright if able. If unable, assist to lie down, lying on one side with the back straight as possible to help expand the lungs. This is important to promote deep breathing necessary to prevent and/or treat pneumonia. Keep the head elevated as much as possible. For comfort, place a pillow, folded blanket or even folded towels between the bent knees. **If the client complains of difficulty breathing, pain in the chest or abdomen, wheezing or shortness of breath, and/or appears to have labored breathing, as noted when watching the client's chest rise and fall quickly, seek medical attention right away.**
- Attempt to keep smoke away from the client as it can worsen symptoms.
- Sometimes, coughing may produce green or yellow colored mucus. If the client coughs up blood, seek medical attention. It is advised NOT to take cough medicine WITHOUT FIRST TALKING TO THE DOCTOR. Cough medicines can decrease the mucus removal that coughing promotes.

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