

A Visual Primer for Pharmacists to Safely and Effectively Address COVID-19

The Pharmacists' Patient Care Process can be utilized to ensure a systematic approach.



Collect

The clinical presentation varies from asymptomatic to severe symptoms that require hospitalization or ventilation.

A thorough patient history includes:

- When the patient may have been exposed and is the infection confirmed with a positive test
- Current symptoms (pertinent positives and negatives to determine the severity)
- Past medical history
- Medication history



Assess

- Is the patient a candidate for self-treatment or are there exclusions present?
- Severity of symptoms and whether patient needs to be seen by another HCP or go to the ED
- Consider comorbidities or drug-drug interactions that may be present with the treatment options



Plan

The only medications that have thorough recommendations for symptomatic treatment are NSAIDs and acetaminophen for symptomatic relief of fever and pain. Other medications may be utilized; however, there is limited information with their place in therapy. Prior to recommending, a differential diagnosis and patient factors should be considered to ensure there are no precautions or contraindications.

- For milder symptomatic relief – self-care and OTC medications (see right column)
- For more severe symptoms – appropriate referral
- Strategies to reduce spread of COVID-19



Implement

- Help select appropriate products
- Provide patient education
- Collaborate with other HCPs when appropriate



Follow Up*

- Discuss expectations with patients
- Describe what worsening symptoms look like and what to do
- Ask patient to call you with any further questions

*Stay in touch with HCP, recognize symptoms that require medical attention.

MILDER SYMPTOMS

Cough
Fever or chills
Muscle pain or body ache
Congestion or runny nose
Sore throat
Loss of smell or taste
Headache
Nausea
Vomiting
Diarrhea

EMERGENT SYMPTOMS

Trouble breathing
Persistent chest pain or pressure in the chest
New confusion
Inability to wake or stay awake
Bluish lips or face

Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath

* Milder symptoms may be managed with self-care and OTC medications.

Recommendation	Examples
Pain and fever management	Acetaminophen, NSAIDs [†]
Nasal congestion	Pseudoephedrine, phenylephrine [†]
Cough	Dextromethorphan, menthol/camphor [†]
Nonpharmacologic options	Hydration, sleep, rest
Quarantine	Stay home for 14 days, avoid public transportation, avoid sharing personal items with people that live in your home
Social distancing	Masks, 6 feet apart
Cleaning/disinfecting	Wash hands appropriately and frequently, throw trash in lined can
Mental health*	Connect with friends and family via video chat, make time to meditate and unwind from the news

[†]Patient comorbidities may impact recommendations.

*Encourage a safe, judgment-free environment for patients to discuss feelings of sadness, loneliness, hopelessness, or thoughts of self-harm.

Pharmacists can ease fears/concerns about the use of ibuprofen by providing patients and prescribers with the most recent safety and efficacy data from clinical studies exploring the use of ibuprofen. Here is some information about proper NSAID use:

Most clinical guidance states the treatment of fever and myalgias should include acetaminophen and NSAIDs.

- There is not conclusive evidence to avoid the use of NSAIDs, including ibuprofen, in patients with COVID-19
- Individuals with COVID-19 who are taking NSAIDs for a comorbid condition should continue therapy as directed
- Using NSAIDs at the lowest effective dose for the shortest duration is prudent

Trusted Resources

CDC Clinical Resource for Each COVID-19 Vaccine	cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/index.html
CDC Information for Health Care Professionals about COVID-19	cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/index.html
CDC Management of Patients With Confirmed COVID-19	cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/clinical-guidance-management-patients.html

Information and Frequently Asked Questions for Patients and Caregivers During COVID-19

COVID-19 CALENDAR

This calendar shows a generalized example of what can be expected after being exposed to COVID-19. The timeline and symptoms may be different for everyone, but this calendar shows what may be expected.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Day 1 You have contact with a person who is positive for COVID-19.		48-72 hours You may be able to spread the virus to others for 48-72 hours before starting to experience symptoms.		Day 5 You develop symptoms of COVID-19. Most symptoms occur within 4-5 days following exposure.		Day 7 You schedule an appointment and get a COVID-19 test.
You should contact your health care provider or emergency department if you or a family member is experiencing: Trouble breathing Pain or pressure in the chest Blue lips or face Keep falling asleep—not able to stay awake Explain your symptoms to them and they will inform you of what next steps to take.				Day 12 You receive your test results showing you are positive for COVID-19.	Days 13-20 The time from moment of exposure to COVID-19 until signs and symptoms of the disease appear occurs within 14 days. You should continue to self-isolate at home and monitor your symptoms.	
Days 13-20 If you have a mild case of COVID-19, you may recover in 7-14 days, but sometimes the disease can linger for several weeks or months. If you develop symptoms of COVID-19, you may no longer be able to spread the disease to others 10 days after your symptoms resolve. If you had severe COVID-19 disease, you will need to contact your health care provider for the latest recommendations.						Day 21 Your symptoms may begin to resolve.
Day 22 You should be without fever for 24 hours.		Day 24 Contact your health care provider for the latest recommendations for ending your at-home self-isolation.				

Q/A

What can I do or take to manage my symptoms?



Fever-reducing medications such as acetaminophen and ibuprofen are recommended. Fluids and cough medicine can be helpful to manage other symptoms of COVID-19. Talk with your pharmacist or health care provider before use.

Q/A

I received a positive COVID-19 test result. When can I end my self-isolation at home?



Never developed symptoms: 10 days after the date of your positive COVID-19 test.



Mild symptoms of COVID-19: At least 10 days after symptoms first appeared and be fever-free without fever-reducing medications for 24 hours.



Severe COVID-19 disease or a weakened immune system: At least 10 days, but may need longer; contact your health care provider.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, self-isolation at home and social distancing can be overwhelming and increase feelings of loneliness, stress, and anxiety.



Connect with friends and family via video chat



Make time to meditate and unwind from the news



Join community organizations online, through social media, or by phone



Seek Help

Talk with your pharmacist or primary care doctor if you are experiencing feelings of sadness, loneliness, hopelessness, or thoughts of self-harm.



Information About COVID-19

Information about COVID-19 is rapidly changing. Recommendations for self-isolation and quarantining are constantly being updated. Talk to your pharmacist for the most up-to-date appropriate local quarantines.

Trusted Resources for Patients	
The Anxiety and Depression Association of America	adaa.org/finding-help/coronavirus-anxiety-helpful-resources
CDC Coronavirus Self-Check Tool	cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/coronavirus-self-checker.html
Mayo Clinic Treating COVID-19 at Home	mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/coronavirus/in-depth/treating-covid-19-at-home/art-20483273

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