

Why Your Patient is Covid Cautious:

A guide for healthcare workers with patients who request Covid precautions

Covid safety in the healthcare system



- As a healthcare worker, the safety and well-being of your patients is likely very important to you.
- The healthcare facility you work for may no longer require Covid safety measures, like universal masking or testing.
- When healthcare facilities don't implement Covid-safe policies, patients are more likely to avoid accessing care, leading to worse health outcomes.
- When healthcare providers adopt Covid-safe practices, it makes healthcare more accessible and helps patients feel safer in their provider's care.
- Many patients have ongoing concerns about contracting Covid while accessing healthcare services. Many of these patients already have long Covid, are considered high risk, or have high risk family members.
- The mortality rate of nosocomial COVID-19 is nearly 10%, with some studies showing higher rates ([Kim et al., 2023](#)).
- Long COVID and associated conditions (LCACs) can qualify as a disability under the ADA/Section 504, entitling patients to accommodations.



What we know about Covid & Long Covid

- 75.4% of U.S. adults had at least one increased-risk condition, 40.3% had at least two, 18.5% had three or more conditions ([Ajufo et al., 2021](#)).
- CDC defines high-risk populations: "racial and ethnic minority groups," pregnant people, infants, age 65+, developmental disabilities, mood disorders, diabetes, asthma, autoimmune diseases, & more
 - CDC says: symptoms can last weeks, months, years or be lifelong
- American Medical Association: at least 20-30% of patients will develop Long Covid
 - 200+ potential symptoms, across all organ systems
- Risk increases with each infection ([Bowe et al., 2022](#)).
- 70% of individuals with long Covid exhibited evidence of damage to at least one organ ([Li et al., 2023](#)).
- Covid is airborne, and can hang in the air for multiple hours.

How you can support Covid cautious patients

- Patients have valid reasons to want to avoid Covid infections, and asking providers for safety precautions can feel scary for patients. Empathizing with patients' concerns can help them feel safer with you.
- You can support patients by: wearing an N95 mask, adding air filters to help clean the air of viruses, opening windows for ventilation, offering them first appointment of the day and permit waiting outside before appointments (Bonus: lots of these measures keep you safer too!)
- Advocate for increasing Covid safety measures in your workplace.
- Learn more about Long Covid and share information with your colleagues.

