

## **VIRAL SYNDROME PANDEMIC TRIAGE PROTOCOL**

This West Virginia OEMS EMERGENCY protocol is to provide guidance for EMS Operations utilizing the Viral Syndrome Pandemic Triage Protocol. A global pandemic due to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) has precipitated a surge in calls for Emergency Medical Services (EMS) related to viral syndromes. Governor Justice has declared a state of emergency in response to the situation. Furthermore, COVID-19 will continue to cause continued high demand for service from EMS and concurrent absenteeism in the EMS workforce for weeks to months.

With anticipated unprecedented patient volumes for EMS and West Virginia 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.

- A. This protocol applies to all level providers for appropriate patients.
- B. Carefully review information obtained by the 911 operator and utilize appropriate PPE prior to making patient contact.
- C. Perform **Initial Treatment / Universal Patient Care Protocol** to obtain pertinent information from a distance of 6 feet or greater.
- D. EMS clinicians shall utilize the WVOEMS Viral Syndrome Pandemic Triage Sheet (Appendix A) to determine transport requirements for the patient.
  - 1. All thirteen (13) criteria outlined on the triage sheet SHALL be evaluated.
  - 2. Anytime a check is made in a gray shaded area, the patient SHALL be transported unless they refuse service.
- E. In the event a patient refuses transport or is not a candidate for transport under this protocol, a proper patient refusal should be documented. Documentation should indicate use of the WVOEMS Viral Syndrome Pandemic Triage Protocol.
- F. Patients that refuse transport or are not a candidate for transport under this protocol shall be given a copy of the Viral Infection Home Care Instructions (Appendix B).
- G. If patient presentation/evaluation does not meet viral syndrome criteria, treat per the appropriate WVOEMS protocol.

**VIRAL SYNDROME PANDEMIC TRIAGE SHEET**  
**Appendix A**

YES	NO	CRITERIA
YES	NO	Patient age is between 2 and 55 years
YES	NO	Patient has a suspected viral syndrome with less than two (2) of the following symptoms: fever, cough, body aches, new onset shortness of breath or sore throat
YES	NO	Patient has a history of immunosuppression, or is taking medicines that depress the immune system (cancer undergoing chemotherapy, transplant patient, HIV, etc.)
YES	NO	Patient has a history of diabetes
YES	NO	Patient has a history of heart disease
YES	NO	Patient has a history of COPD or lung disease
YES	NO	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)
YES	NO	Patient has a systolic blood pressure between: 110-180 mmHg (age 13-55 years); (age 2-5 years: > 80mmHg; age 6-12 years: > 90mmHg)
YES	NO	Oxygen saturation (SpO2) greater than or equal to 94%
YES	NO	Clear lung sounds
YES	NO	Respiratory rate between 12 - 22 breaths per minute, and the patient does not complain of shortness of breath
YES	NO	Patient is able to ambulate without difficulty
YES	NO	Patient is agreeable to home self-care YES NO ANY

- **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.

## **VIRAL SYNDROME PANDEMIC (Appendix B) HOME CARE INSTRUCTION**

### **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.

## **VIRAL SYNDROME PANDEMIC (Appendix B) HOME CARE INSTRUCTION**

- **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.

### **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 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. Call the local health department for alternative sites providing testing.

**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.

Stay up to date on COVID-19:

**coronavirus.wv.gov**

Questions? Call our 24/7, toll-free COVID-19 hotline:

**1-800-887-4304**