



COVID-19 Public Health Recommendations for Maternal/Child Home Visitation: Updated May 2022

These recommendations are intended for agencies providing maternal/child home visiting servicesⁱ and are provided to promote the health and safety of our communities.

Key points

- In-person home visiting is recommended if safety measures can be met (see Section III below).
- Staying [up to date](#) with COVID-19 vaccination and booster doses is a safe, effective, and reliable way to reduce risk for developing severe COVID-19 and spreading COVID-19 to others.
- It is strongly recommended that a home visitor be up to date with vaccination and booster doses prior to reinstating in-person visits.
- It is strongly recommended that all home visitors wear [well-fitting](#) disposable procedure or surgical masks during home visits, regardless of vaccination status. Fit tested N95 masks provide the best protection, and may be especially important when working with individuals who are unvaccinated or at [high risk](#) for severe COVID-19.
- Local home visiting agencies are strongly encouraged to establish policies and procedures for in-person home visiting services prior to providing in-person services.
- Remote or telehealth methods of home visiting may continue if home visiting model guidance and administrative rules continue to support these methods of service delivery.
- Key considerations for providing in-person home visiting include equity, consensus agreement from all participants in the visit and the ability to follow established safety precautions.

I. Background:

Home visiting is a critical service and a source of significant support to families. The objectives of home visiting have been accomplished through remote or telehealth service delivery during the COVID-19 pandemic; however, it is not the intention at the state or federal level to replace in-person home visiting services with remote care methods. Instead, state and federal level home visiting leaders are evaluating how remote or telehealth home visiting service delivery might be integrated in the future.

At this stage in the pandemic, layering the core public health strategies of vaccination and boosters for those eligible, face coverings or masks, eye protection, physical distancing, ventilation and air flow, hand hygiene, cleaning and disinfecting, screening for symptoms, and isolation and quarantine make in-person services safer.

II. It is recommended that a home visiting agency:

- Prioritize health and safety for home visitors and families when planning for in-person home visits, especially understanding the toll COVID-19 has had on communities of color and Tribal communities across Oregon.
- Establish policies and procedures for in-person services that address the areas outlined in section III prior to conducting in-person home visits.
- Continue to offer remote or telehealth home visiting services as an option when endorsed by model or program guidance and state rule.

III. Considerations for in-person home visiting services:

- **Equity Impact:** Communities of color and Tribal communities, specifically Latino/a/x, Black/African American, Pacific Islander and American Indian/Alaska Native populations have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. Consider and assess how returning to in-home services will address inequities that staff and families experience. For example, agencies may want to identify and prioritize families and populations who experienced inequitable access to technology required for remote or telehealth home visiting services.
- **Family Voice:** Honor family decisions on type of visit (telehealth or in-person) that feels most comfortable to them. Individual circumstances and risk from the pandemic vary and affect comfort with in-person contact. Whether family members choose to get vaccinated is a personal choice and should not be used to limit access to home visiting services. Inform families of the risks of COVID-19 infection and transmission and obtain verbal agreement from family prior to an in-person home visit taking place.

- **Home Visitor Voice:** home visitors have individual circumstances that affect their risk and comfort with in-person care. An individual home visitor's circumstances should be taken into consideration when deciding whether to provide an in-person or telehealth visit in collaboration with the organization's human resources department and applicable job modification rules.
- **Vaccination:** It is strongly recommended that a home visitor be [up to date](#) with vaccination and booster doses prior to reinstating in-person visits.
 - Vaccination with booster doses is a safe, effective and reliable way to reduce the risk of getting severely sick from COVID-19. It's the best tool we have to help us manage the COVID-19 pandemic in Oregon.
 - Home visitors can promote vaccines and support access to vaccination and booster doses for eligible family membersⁱⁱ.
 - People are considered up to date with vaccination for COVID-19 if they have received a booster dose, if they are within 5mo of completing a mRNA vaccine series (PfizerBioNTech or Moderna), or within 2 months after receiving the single-dose vaccine (Johnson and Johnson [J&J]/Janssen).
- **Local Community COVID Levels:** If local [COVID-19 level](#) is medium, increase [layers of infection prevention](#) strategies. When the COVID-19 level is high, prioritize in person visits for those with greatest need.
- **Screening for symptoms:** home visitors and families should be screened for current [symptoms](#) of COVID-19, a positive COVID-19 test or awaiting results, or recent exposure to COVID-19.

If the family or the home visitor has any symptoms consistent with COVID-19 or a positive COVID-19 test in the past 5 days, they should [isolate](#) and do not conduct the in-person visit.

- **Exposure:** If the family or the home visitor has been in close contact with a person who has COVID-19, for the 10 days following exposure they should wear a well-fitting mask when around others and watch for COVID-19 symptoms. They should get tested if they develop symptoms and consider getting a test 5 days after exposure, regardless of symptoms. Postponing an in-person home visit or scheduling a telehealth visit should be considered.
- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):**
 - Home visitors should wear a new procedure or surgical masks whether or not the home visitor or family members are fully vaccinated during every

in-person home visit. Fit tested N95s provide the most protection particularly during times of substantial and high [COVID-19 transmission](#). Programs may choose to require home visitors to wear them during in-person visiting services.

- Eye protection (face shield or goggles) should be worn during times of substantial or high [COVID-19 community transmission](#).
 - It is expected that home visiting agencies will provide and require, [at no cost to workers](#), masks and eye protection (face shield or goggles). It is also expected that agencies will provide face coverings to any adult caregivers or children who are present during the home visit, at no cost, and that all present wear a face covering if safe to do so and developmentally appropriate. Children under 2 years of age are not advised to wear face coverings.
- **Hygiene:** Consider what materials and resources are utilized for home visits. Limit the use of materials that will be utilized across multiple families unless they can be sanitized between use. Wash hands before and after each visit with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer (60–95% alcohol content), covering all surfaces of the hands and rubbing them together until dry. Use soap and water if hands are visibly dirty. Practice & encourage respiratory etiquette. Avoid touching eyes when holding, washing, or feeding a child.
 - **Space:** Consider whether the number of families receiving an in-person contact can be limited to reduce the risk of the home visitor passing the virus from one family to another. Prioritize working with families at highest risk of severe illness first in the day, consider if in-person visits can take place outdoors or within the agency in a large meeting space to increase air flow and maintain physical distancing while using face coverings.
 - **Air flow:** Promote [air flow](#) in indoor spaces. If it's safe to do so, open multiple doors and windows as much as you can to bring in fresh, outdoor air. Turn on the exhaust fan in the kitchen or bathroom to increase air flow. Consider child-safe fans or portable [HEPA](#) air cleaners.

Additional tools

- [CDC COVID-19 Information and Resources Direct Service Providers for Children and Families: Information for Home Visitors](#)
- [Health Resources and Services Administration \(HRSA\) on identifying risk and precautions](#)
- [Safe and Strong Oregon](#)
- [OHA COVID19 Updates](#)
- [COVID19 Vaccine Info](#)
- [Find a COVID19 Vaccine](#)
- [CDC Vaccination and Booster Recommendations](#)
- [Face coverings and masks](#)
- [Ventilation and airflow](#)
- [Hand hygiene](#)
- [Cleaning and disinfecting](#)
- [Physical distancing](#)
- [Screening for symptoms](#)
- [Testing for COVID19](#)
- [CDC Guidance for Early Care and Education/Child Care Programs](#)
- OHA [COVID-19 related rules](#): ORS 333-019: Investigation and Control of Diseases
- [OR-OSHA Rules Addressing COVID-19 Workplace Risks](#)

These recommendations will remain in place unless there is new evidence that causes a change, or they are replaced with federal guidance from the CDC.

Document accessibility: For individuals with disabilities or individuals who speak a language other than English, OHA can provide information in alternate formats such as translations, large print, or braille. Contact the COVID-19 Communications Unit at 1-971-673-2411, 711 TTY or COVID19.LanguageAccess@dhsosha.state.or.us.

ⁱ Such as Babies 1st!, CaCoon, Early Head Start, Early Intervention, Healthy Families America, Nurse-Family Partnership, Parents as Teachers and Relief Nurseries

ⁱⁱ For more information on vaccine effectiveness and breakthrough cases, see the following resources:

- Oregon Health Authority Breakthrough Cases Report:
<https://govstatus.egov.com/OR-OHA-COVID-19>
- Explanation of breakthrough cases:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OTUy3kob9gs>
- CDC data on COVID-19 vaccine effectiveness:
https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/covid19_vaccine_safety.html