

POST-MORTEM CARE COVID-19

Policy

The dignity of a resident who has died including their cultural and religious traditions/beliefs and their family will be respected and protected while providing postmortem care to the extent possible during a pandemic.

COVID-19 Considerations

- To date there is no evidence of persons having become infected from exposure to the bodies of persons who died from COVID-19.
- Only the lungs of patients with pandemic influenza, if handled improperly during an autopsy, can be infectious. Otherwise, cadavers do not transmit disease.
- Avoid rushing the process of removing resident remains; take appropriate time, care and respect
- Authorities should manage each situation on a case-by-case basis, balancing the rights of the family, the need to investigate the cause of death, and the risk of exposure to infection
- Staff should apply standard precautions, ensure appropriate hand hygiene (before and after providing care) and personal protective equipment (PPE) supplies (gown, gloves, facemask and eye protection) are available
- The remains do not need to be disinfected prior to transport to the funeral home
- The use of body bags is not necessary unless there is excessive body fluid leakage, etc.
- No special transport equipment or vehicle is required.

Procedure

1. If the resident has a roommate, relocate the resident to a comfortable location within the center until post-mortem care is completed and the remains have been removed.
2. Gather supplies: PPE, plastic bags, bathing supplies, etc.
3. Wash hands.
4. Put on gown, gloves, mask and eye protection.
5. Close curtain and door to maintain privacy.
6. Treat the body gently and with respect.
7. Remove any tubes and dressings.
8. Lay body flat with pillow under head, limbs straight and place the hands on the chest.
9. Close eyes
10. If the resident has dentures, place them in the resident's mouth and close the mouth if possible.
11. Wash body as needed; keep movement and handling of the body to a minimum.
12. Comb hair.
13. Place fresh dressing over wounds if drainage is present; cover perineal area and other areas where body fluids may leak.
14. Wrap body in bath sheet/blanket and arrange for transport to the funeral home as soon as possible.
15. Remove PPE and perform hand hygiene.

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This policy and procedure is not intended to replace the informed judgment of individual physicians, nurses or other clinicians nor is it intended as a statement of prevailing community standards or minimum standards of practice. It is a suggested method and technique for achieving optimal health care, not a minimum standard below which residents necessarily would be placed at risk.

_____ Administrator Signature	_____ Date
_____ Medical Director Signature	_____ Date
_____ Participating Health Care Provider Signature	_____ Date

https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/331538/WHO-COVID-19-IPC_DBMgmt-2020.1-eng.pdf

<https://educate.ahcancal.org/products/temporary-nurse-aide>

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