



Ministry of Health, Bhutan

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ROYAL GOVERNMENT OF BHUTAN

MINISTRY OF HEALTH

Secretary's Office

THIMPHU BHUTAN

P.O BOX: 726



SECRETARY

Ref no- MOH/SEC/44/2019-20/ 12994

19th May 2020

The Hon'ble Secretary
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Thimphu

Subject: Protocol for COVID-19 confirmed cases and close contacts abroad

Dear Dasho,

As requested by your Ministry, the Ministry of Health has developed the "Protocol for COVID-19 confirmed cases and close contacts abroad." For more details, your team may contact Technical Advisory Group @ tagcovid19@health.gov.bt or Mr. Kinley Dorji, the National Quarantine team leader @ dorjik@health.gov.bt.

Yours sincerely,

(Dr Ugen Dophu)

Secretary

Ministry of Health

Copy to:

1. The PS to Her Excellency the Minister, MoH for kind appraisal
2. Technical Advisory Group members for information
3. Office copy

Protocol for COVID 19 confirmed cases and close contacts abroad

A. COVID 19 cases confirmed abroad

1. Immediately isolate at hospital or in the identified facility/home quarantine depending on the condition of a patient.
2. Provide the detail of the case to Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) and Ministry of Health (MoH) in Bhutan as given below:

a. MoFA Contact details:

Ms. Tashi Pelden
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Email id - tpelden@mfa.gov.bt
Contact no- 17176767

Ms. Meto Dema
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Email id - mdema@mfa.gov.bt
Contact no- 17973171

**Note- the contact information of the nearest embassies and consulates can be sought from the above-mentioned officials*

b. MoH Contact details

Mr. Kinley Dorji
Ministry of Health
Contact no- 17635634
Email id- dorjik@health.gov.bt

3. Provide the details of their close contacts if returned to Bhutan immediately. This will allow MoH to conduct enhance monitoring and testing of close contacts of the confirmed case in the quarantine facility.
4. Due to the risk of transmission to other passengers and inflight crews, the confirmed case should not be allowed to travel to Bhutan until recovery and tested negative by RT-PCR.
5. In case an individual is suffering from severe COVID-19 or other medical emergency, the nearest embassies or consulate office should support and facilitate the management of the case at the hospital (or follow Government directives).
6. The case shall only be allowed to travel to Bhutan after recovery and testing negative by RT-PCR.



B. Individuals living abroad who are close contacts of confirmed COVID 19 cases (either in Bhutan or abroad)

1. The MoH shall provide details of the confirmed case and his/her close contacts living abroad to MoFA (contact details mentioned above). The MoFA shall then inform the relevant Embassy or Consulate General Office abroad.
2. The close contacts should be quarantined immediately at the designated facility/home as appropriate.
3. Where home quarantine is not possible due to sharing of rooms or apartment, the Embassy should facilitate quarantine in the designated facility.
4. Embassy officials should closely monitor for their signs and symptoms and facilitate medical consultation if required.
5. All close contacts should follow all preventive measures such as physical distancing, frequent handwashing, cough etiquette and use of face mask.
6. If the close contacts want to return to Bhutan within 14 days, they should be allowed to travel upon testing negative by RT-PCR. However, if they have completed 14 days quarantine abroad, they may be allowed to travel without testing by RT-PCR.
7. Irrespective of whether the individual has completed quarantine period abroad, all shall undergo 21 days mandatory quarantine upon arrival to Bhutan.

Precaution measures for prevention of COVID-19

1. Avoid going to the crowded cities, shopping malls or any other public places
2. Maintain at least 1-meter distance with strangers while shopping grocery and food items
3. Maintain at least 1-meter distance or avoid contact with people who are coughing and not wearing a mask.
4. Practice cough etiquette and frequent hand washing.
5. Avoid touching eyes, nose, mouth, face without washing hand or using hand sanitizer
6. Avoid hugging, handshake, or kissing with friends, colleagues, etc.
7. If you visit hospital for other illness, use face mask and hand sanitizer, and practice hand hygiene
8. If you or a person near you has a fever and cough during your travel, wear mask and adopt other precautionary measures to prevent transmission.
9. Inform the nearest Royal Bhutan Embassy or Consulate office if you have signs and symptoms of COVID-19 (fever, cough, shortness of breath, diarrhea, fatigue, loss of smell or taste, etc) at your place of stay or while on transit halt in any country.

