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## Guidelines

# Home Isolation during COVID 19 Outbreak

### Objective

To provide the positively diagnosed individuals, health care provider and the caretakers the guidelines regarding **home isolation**, when they or more of the household members become sick during an epidemic of a communicable disease.

### Rationale

The guidelines provide evidence-based care measures to limit the spread of a COVID 19. These measures can help to ensure the infection prevention control (IPC) and reduce the unnecessary burden on acute care facilities.

### Definitions & Abbreviations

**Fever** Armpit temperature of 37.5° C or more.

### Procedure

#### Care guidelines for the confirmed case during home isolation:

- Stay home when there is no urgent need to go out.
- Limit physical contact with others as much as possible.
- When you need to go out, keep a distance of two arm's length (about 6 feet) from others.
- Do not leave home even if you are sick:
  - First call your doctor and then follow his advice.
  - Stay in contact with others by phone or email.
  - If you decide to stay home and one or more of the following symptoms appear, immediately report to your doctor:
    - Fever or
    - Cough or
    - Shortness of breath or trouble breathing
    - Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
    - New confusion or inability to arouse
    - Bluish lips or face
  - Make sure you have access to several weeks of medications and supplies in case you need to stay home.



- In case of a preexisting underlying medical condition like hypertension, cardiovascular disease, diabetes: reach out to your medical care provider to discuss the management (Separate guidelines on management of comorbid conditions)
- Ill person should stay in a separate room maintaining distance from others in the household
- Take everyday preventive steps:
  - Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for 40-60 seconds. If soap and water are not available, rub your hands for 20-30 seconds with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains 60-80% alcohol.
  - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
  - Cover your cough or sneeze in the bend of elbow or a tissue, then throw the tissue in the bin.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces within home e.g. door handles, switch boards etc. (Separate Guidelines on Surface Disinfection)
- Do not give your mobile to any of the household member. In case there is a need to share it someone, clean it with a disinfectant.
- Stay informed about the local outbreak situation.
- Notify your health condition at your work (adopt work from home)
- Avoid having any unnecessary visitors.
- Home isolation (staying home) of sick persons can be ended if:
  - They have had no fever for at least 72 hours without the use medicine that reduces fevers.
  - Other symptoms have improved (for example, when their cough or shortness of breath has improved).
- Take additional precautions for those at higher risk, particularly older adults and those who have severe underlying health conditions.

### **Safety measures for the caretaker of the confirmed case:**

- If caring for a sick household member, follow recommended precautions and monitor your own health.
  - Keep surfaces disinfected.
  - Avoid sharing personal items like dishes, towels, and bedding.
  - If possible, have them use a separate washroom.
  - Have them wear a facemask when they are around people, including you.
  - If the sick person can't wear a face mask; you should wear one while in the same room with them.
  - The ill person in a house should eat/be fed in their room if possible.
  - Non-disposable food service items used should be handled with gloves and washed with hot water or in a dishwasher. Clean hands after handling used food service items.
  - If possible, dedicate a lined trash can for the ill person. Use gloves when removing garbage bags, handling, and disposing of trash. Wash hands after handling or disposing of trash.
  - Dirty laundry from an ill person can be washed with other people's items
    - Wear disposable gloves when handling dirty laundry from an ill person and then discard after each use.



- If no gloves are used when handling dirty laundry, be sure to wash hands afterwards.
- If possible, do not shake dirty laundry. This will minimize the possibility of dispersing virus through the air.
- Launder items as appropriate in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. If possible, launder items using the warmest appropriate water setting for the items and dry items completely.
- Clean and disinfect clothes hampers according to guidance above for surfaces.
- If possible, placing a disposable or washable bag liner that is either disposable.
- Take care of the emotional health of the other household members, including yourself.

*Note: The above recommendations are being regularly reviewed by the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations & Coordination and will be updated based on the international & national recommendations and best practices.*

*The Ministry acknowledges the contribution of Irfan Mirza and HSA/ HPSIU/ NIH team to compile these guidelines.*

#### **References:**

1. CDC, Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID 19), Resource for Home (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/home/index.html>)

#### **For more information, please contact:**

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