

# **GUIDELINES FOR MANAGEMENT OF COVID-19 IN HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS (HCP)**

**(Version 1)**

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## DEFINITIONS

**Asymptomatic case:** is a person infected with COVID-19, who does not develop symptoms, mentioned below:

Most common symptoms: fever, dry cough, tiredness.

Less common symptoms: aches and pains, sore throat, diarrhoea, conjunctivitis, headache, loss of taste or smell, a rash on skin, or discolouration of fingers or toes.

Serious symptoms: difficulty breathing or shortness of breath, chest pain or pressure, loss of speech or movement.

**COVID-19:** is a disease caused by a new strain of coronavirus. Formerly, this disease was referred to as '2019 novel coronavirus' or '2019-nCoV.' The COVID-19 virus is a new virus linked to the same family of viruses named Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and some types of common cold.

**COVID-19 Test -Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR):** is the standard test for the detection of the virus that causes COVID19. It tests for the virus' genetic material, and a positive test detects at least two genes. The test is generally done from a swab taken from the nasopharynx.

**Close contact:** is someone having exposure to a person with COVID-19, without using proper personal protective equipment (PPE), from 2 days before onset of illness/date of positive swab to 10 days after (excluding people who have had COVID-19 Disease diagnosed by PCR within the past 3 months prior to the exposure).

**Exposure:** is defined as one or more of the following:

- Being within 2 meters of a COVID-19 case for 15 minutes or more.
- Direct physical contact with a COVID-19 case.
- Providing direct care for patients with COVID-19 disease either at home or in the healthcare setting (without proper PPE).
- Living in the same household as a COVID-19 case.

**Full Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):** are specialized clothing or equipment (i.e., gown, gloves, eye protection, N95 mask) worn by healthcare professionals for protection against infectious materials.

**Health Facility:** A DHA licensed entity that is authorised to provide medical services whether its owner or manager is an individual or an organization.

**Healthcare Professionals (HCP):** refers to all persons, paid and unpaid, working in healthcare settings engaged in patient care activities, including: patient assessment for triage, entering examination rooms or patient rooms to provide care or clean and disinfect the environment, obtaining clinical specimens, handling soiled medical supplies or equipment and coming in contact with potentially contaminated environmental surfaces.

**Isolation:** is separation of patients and/or staff into a secluded area or room for infection control purposes. Isolation may include self-isolation in a room, home or residential institution.

**Occupational Exposure in HCP:** is the exposure of HCP to COVID-19 because of the following:

- HCP not wearing appropriate PPE when in contact with a COVID-19 patient
- The COVID-19 patient not wearing a facemask when in contact with the HCP

- HCP not wearing all recommended PPE (i.e., gown, gloves, eye protection, respirator) while performing an aerosol-generating procedure.

**Quarantine:** Separation and restriction of movement of patients or people who are exposed to a contagious disease to determine if they have been exposed or become sick.

## ABBREVIATIONS

<b>COVID-19</b>	:	Corona Virus Disease
<b>DHA</b>	:	Dubai Health Authority
<b>HCP</b>	:	Healthcare Professionals
<b>PCR</b>	:	Polymerase Chain Reaction
<b>PPE</b>	:	Personal Protective Equipment

## 1. BACKGROUND

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus. Most people infected with the COVID-19 virus experience mild to moderate respiratory illness and recover without requiring special treatment. Older people and those with underlying medical problems like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease and cancer are more likely to develop serious illness.

The best way to prevent and slow down transmission is to be adequately informed about the disease, its cause, how it spreads and precautions to be taken.

Healthcare professionals (HCP) in particular are at risk for COVID-19 exposure, due to direct and prolonged contact with patients. Hence, they need to take relevant required measures to limit the spread of COVID-19 when exposure is suspected or confirmed.

## 2. SCOPE

2.1. Effective and efficient management of HCP exposed to COVID 19

## 3. PURPOSE

- 3.1. Safety of HCP.
- 3.2. Safety of Patients.
- 3.3. Curtail the spread of COVID-19 in the society.

## 4. APPLICABILITY

- 4.1. DHA licensed Healthcare Professionals
- 4.2. DHA licensed Health Facilities

## 5. RECOMMENDATION ONE: GENERAL PRECAUTIONS

5.1. HCP shall follow all recommendations related to infection prevention and control practices that consist of the following:

- 5.1.1. DO NOT report to work when unwell.
- 5.1.2. Wear a facemask for source control while at work.
- 5.1.3. While at work, undergo active screening for fever or symptoms consistent with COVID-19.
- 5.1.4. Report immediately to the line manager and/or point of contact like their health facility's occupational health clinic, for a medical evaluation in case they develop symptoms consistent with COVID-19 during working hours.

## 6. RECOMMENDATION TWO: HCP DIAGNOSED/CONFIRMED WITH COVID-19

6.1. HCP diagnosed/confirmed with COVID-19 by Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) testing should follow the DHA Interim Guidance for Isolation/De-isolation of COVID-19 Patients and Quarantine of Close Contacts.

## 7. RECOMMENDATION THREE: MANAGEMENT OF HCP EXPOSED/CLOSE CONTACT TO COVID-19 PATIENTS

- 7.1. This recommendation applies to occupationally and non-occupationally exposed HCP.
- 7.2. HCP who are identified as close contact to identified COVID-19 case(s) should abide by the following:

- 7.2.1. Quarantine for ten (10) days from the date of last exposure, even if they have negative COVID-19 PCR test and self-monitor for any recognized COVID-19 related symptoms.
- 7.2.2. Resume work after ten (10) days, without PCR testing as long as they remain entirely asymptomatic during this period.
- 7.2.3. Continue to be vigilant for a total of fourteen (14) days post exposure for any symptoms and report them immediately.
- 7.2.4. On resuming work, they should ensure they abide by all recommended precautions.
- 7.2.5. HCP who develop any COVID-19 related symptoms during the quarantine period should immediately get themselves PCR tested for COVID-19 at recommended testing facilities and inform their line managers.
- 7.2.6. In case of a positive PCR test, isolate and adhere to medical advice and align with the DHA Interim Guidance for Isolation/De-isolation of COVID-19 Patients and Quarantine of Close Contacts.
- 7.2.7. In case of severe shortage of HCPs, they could resume work earlier by undergoing a PCR test on day seven (7) after last exposure.
- 7.2.8. To resume work the PCR test result has to be negative and the HCP has to have been completely asymptomatic throughout the 7 days quarantine.
- 7.2.9. Precautions for HCP resuming work earlier than ten (10) days:



- a. Use full PPE and strictly abide by all recommended precautions and symptom vigilance up to fourteen (14) days post last exposure with close monitoring by the infection control nurse during this period.
- b. Self-monitor for any symptoms consistent with COVID-19, with immediate PCR testing, in case symptoms occur.
- c. Symptomatic HCP should be sent home immediately and isolated until a negative PCR result is obtained.

#### **8. RECOMMENDATION FOUR: VACCINATED HCP**

- 8.1. HCP, who are have completed their course of the vaccination for COVID-19, shall follow all above recommended precautions and abide by this guideline.

## REFERENCES

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**APPENDIX 1: FLOW CHART FOR MANAGEMENT OF HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS**

**EXPOSED TO COVI D-19**

