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Guidelines

Home Isolation and Discharge During COVID 19

Objective

To provide the diagnosed (test positive) individuals, health care provider and the caretakers of the diagnosed persons with the guidelines regarding **home isolation** (and discharge) when they or more of the household members become infected with COVID-19 virus.

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 care facilities.

Definitions & Abbreviations

Fever Armpit temperature of 37.5° C or more.

Care Guidelines for the Confirmed Case

- 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 at least 20 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)
- Stay informed about the local outbreak situation.
- Notify your health condition at your work (adopt work from home)
- Avoid having any unnecessary visitors.
- 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 cannot 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, place a disposable or washable bag liner that is disposable.
- Take care of the emotional health of the other household members, including yourself.



Discontinuation of Home Isolation

For Symptomatic patients with confirmed COVID-19:

Symptom-based strategy

- At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery with no or improved respiratory symptoms e.g. dry cough, shortness of breath and resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications
- At least 10 days have passed since first symptoms observed

For Asymptomatic Patients with confirmed COVID-19:

Time-based strategy

- At least 10 days have passed since the first COVID-19 diagnostic test came out positive, assuming no symptoms were developed following the positive test.

A test to document cure is generally **not** required in the above-mentioned cases.

However, for the following individuals, two consecutive negative results of molecular assay for detection of SARS-CoV-2 RNA from respiratory specimens collected ≥ 24 hours apart (total of two negative specimens) are required to discontinue isolation

1. Immunocompromised patients
2. Those living in congregations such as jails, dorms or madarasas
3. Healthcare workers dealing with immunocompromised patients

The molecular assay must be an FDA Emergency Use Authorized for COVID-19

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 Dr Irfan Mirza, Syeda Shehirbano Akhtar 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>)
2. CDC, Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID 19), Discontinuation of Transmission-Based Precautions for patients with COVID-19, 2020

For more information, please contact:

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<http://covid.gov.pk/>

<http://nhsrco.gov.pk/>

<https://www.facebook.com/NHSRCOOfficial>

<http://www.hsa.edu.pk/>

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