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Guidelines

Home Quarantine during COVID 19 Outbreak

Objective

To provide general public, public health and health care professionals the guidelines regarding **Home Quarantine** of close contacts of a confirmed case / suspected case, an individual with travel history to a country with ongoing transmission to ensure that people do not infect others.

Rationale

This guidance is based on evidence about COVID-19 and the feasibility of implementing Infection, Prevention and Control (IPC) measures at home with a priority to people who are close contacts of confirmed/ suspected cases.

Definitions

Contacts are people who

- have been in close contact with a person with confirmed COVID-19 disease from 24 hours before symptom onset
- have lived in the same household as a person with confirmed COVID-19 disease
- have been in direct physical contact (e.g. shaken hands) with someone with confirmed COVID-19 disease or been near (closer than 1 meter), face to face with a person with confirmed COVID-19 disease for more than 15 minutes
- have been in an enclosed space (e.g. a classroom, meeting room, waiting room etc.) with a person with confirmed COVID-19 disease for more than 15 minutes and closer than 1 meter
- have been in direct contact with saliva (e.g. been coughed upon) or other infectious secretions from someone with confirmed COVID-19 disease without recommended personal protective equipment (PPE) or with a possible breach of PPE
- have nursed / treated a patient, handled sample material from a person with confirmed COVID-19 disease, without using the recommended protective equipment
- have sat near (within two seat rows in all directions) a person with confirmed COVID-19 disease on a plane, or near other close contacts on a plane or have been in the same travel group as a person with confirmed COVID-19 disease.
- have been caregivers (family members) or health workers who have been exposed to individuals with suspected or confirmed COVID-19

Home Quarantine means when a Close Contact of a suspected or confirmed case is separated in his home with restricted movement and interaction with other members of family and general public to contain the spread of the disease. The quarantine period is **14 days** from contact with a confirmed or



suspected case or earlier if a suspect case turns out negative on laboratory testing or as decided by the health authorities

Home Isolation implies to restrict movements and interaction of a Confirmed COVID-19 Case with mild symptoms under home settings.

Caregivers refers to parents, spouses, and other family members or friends without formal health care training.

To whom it applies

- All citizens coming from countries affected with COVID-19 and on-going human transmission. The countries include but are not limited to Iran, China, Korea, Japan, Italy, Spain, UK, USA or other countries that have a Level 3 Travel Health Notice
- Any person who has proven close contact / epidemiological link with a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 patient

Procedure

Assessment of the Residential Setting Designated for Home Care:

- The person is stable enough to receive care at home.
- Appropriate caregivers are available at home.
- There is a separate bedroom where the patient can recover without sharing immediate space with others.
- Resources for access to food and other necessities are available.
- The patient and other household members have access to appropriate medical supplies including PPEs needed for home care e.g. surgical masks, gloves, eye protection, alcohol-based (at least 60%) hand sanitizer, waste containers, disposable towels/ linens and are capable of adhering to precautions recommended as part of home care or isolation (e.g., respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette, hand hygiene).
- Consider special needs of persons under quarantine like wheelchair bound, pregnant and lactating mothers.
- There are household members who may be at increased risk of complications from COVID-19 infection (e.g., people >65 years old, young children, pregnant women, people who are immunocompromised or who have chronic heart, lung, or kidney conditions).
- Communication link with a healthcare worker should be established for the duration of the quarantine period until completion.
- Quarantined person and household members should be counseled, educated and sensitized about the importance of quarantine and isolation.

Placement with Restricted Movements

- Patient must be separated from other people in a well-ventilated room with the home a separate bathroom. If a separate bathroom is not available, shared bathroom must be cleaned and disinfected properly each time it is used by the patient.
- If another family member needs to stay in the same room, it's advisable to maintain a distance of at least 1 meter between the two



- Patient must avoid shared spaces like kitchen, lounge. If not possible, then shared spaces in the home must have good air flow, such as by a fan or an opened window
- If the person in quarantine is a housewife, she should avoid preparing, cooking and serving food to other members of the family.
- Only one healthy household member with no other health issue should be designated caregiver of COVID-19 patient.
- Entry of visitors is prohibited until the completion of quarantine period COVID-19 patients who are mildly ill are able to recover at home.
- Patients cannot leave their home, except to get medical care. They cannot visit public areas. This includes mosques, parks and shops and using public transportation, ridesharing, or taxis.
- Patients must stay in touch with a healthcare provided. If patient develops emergency warning signs for COVID-19 like difficulty and shortness of breath, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, confusion, bluish lips or face they must get medical attention immediately. Emergency warning signs include:
 - Before going to the hospital, patient must call ahead and inform hospital staff of symptoms.
 - Patient must only go to a hospital which is on the list of Government identified hospitals for COVID-19.

Instructions for Persons under Quarantine

- Household members must clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces in other areas of the home.
- Household members must perform hand hygiene frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Household members must clean hands before and after preparing food, before eating, after using the toilet and whenever hands appear visibly dirty.
- Household members must all monitor their health and isolate immediately if they develop symptoms.
- Household members must stay away from elderly people, pregnant women, children and person with co-morbidities.

If Quarantined Person develops symptoms

- Notify the receiving medical facility that a symptomatic contact will be arriving.
- The contact should avoid taking public transportation to the facility if possible; an ambulance can be called, or the ill contact can be transported in a private vehicle with all windows open, if possible.
- Any surfaces that become soiled with respiratory secretions or other body fluids during transport should be cleaned with soap or detergent and then disinfected with a regular household product containing a 0.5% diluted bleach solution.

All close contacts of that contact need to be home quarantined for 14 days and followed up for an additional 14 days or until the report of such cases is negative on lab testing.

Infection Prevention Practices and Use of PPEs

Patient:

- The patient must avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.



- Patient must cover mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing and immediately throw the tissue in a covered dustbin and wash hands.
- Patient must keep hands clean by using soap and water for at least 20 seconds or hand alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Soap and water are the best option, especially if hands are visibly dirty.
- 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.
- Patient must use surgical masks at all times. If the mask gets wet or soiled with secretion, it must be changed immediately.
- Patient must put on a facemask before leaving home and keep it on during commute to the hospital and while they are in the hospital. If patient cannot put on a facemask, they must keep a safe distance from other people (at least 1 meter away) to help protect the people in the hospital

Caregiver:

- Caregiver must frequently clean hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- The caregiver should wear a surgical mask when in the same room as the patient.
- The mask should not be touched or handled during use by the caregiver.
- When the mask is being taken off, it should be untied from the back or the side. The front of the mask should not be touched when being removed.
- The mask should be disposed of immediately after use in a covered bin. Hands must be washed properly with soap and water immediately after use.
- When removing mask and gloves, caregiver must first remove and dispose of gloves. Then, immediately clean hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Wash clothes, bed clothes, bath and hand towels, using regular laundry detergent and water or machine wash at 60-90°C with common household detergent and dry thoroughly.
- Surfaces of the frequently used or shared home spaces e.g. bathrooms, living rooms etc. should be disinfected (Separate guidelines for Surface Disinfection)

Waste Management

- Dustbins must be covered with lids and lined with plastic bags. Bags must be tied up before being disposed.
- Disposable facemasks and gloves must be disposed of in a covered bin after using them.
- Do not reuse disposable facemasks and gloves.
- Masks used by care givers/ close contacts during home care should be disinfected using ordinary bleach solution (5%) or sodium hypochlorite solution (1%) and then disposed of either by burning or deep burial

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:

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5. Center for Disease Control guidelines on hand washing: Clean hands save lives) accessed 25 March 2020)
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For more information, please contact:

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