

Guideline for home-based care for COVID – 19 suspected cases

What is COVID – 19?

COVID – 19 is a disease caused by a new coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) and everyone is at risk for coronavirus infection. It is very important to follow preventive measures as the virus is spreading rapidly.

Symptoms usually appear within 5-6 days of being infected with the coronavirus, and some may not appear symptoms until 14 days. Most people who become infected experience only mild to moderate symptoms and do not need to be hospitalized.

People aged 60 years and over, and those with underlying medical problems like high blood pressure, heart and lung problems, diabetes, obesity or cancer, are higher risk of developing serious illness.

1. Symptoms

The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are:

- Fever (99.5 F or 37.5 C and above by a thermometer)
- Dry cough
- Fatigue

Other symptoms that are less common and may affect some patients include:

- Loss of taste or smell
- Nasal congestion
- Conjunctivitis (also known as red eyes)
- Sore throat
- Headache
- Muscle or joint pain
- Different types of skin rash
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Chills or dizziness



Symptoms of severe COVID-19 disease include:

- Shortness of breath, difficulty breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- Loss of speech or movement
- Confusion

2. When you or family member has been suspected of COVID – 19 (or) suffers mild to moderate symptoms



- The ill person should stay in a separate room. If this is not possible, then keep at least a 2-metre distance from others.
- Provide good ventilation in the room of the ill person and in shared spaces, and open windows if possible and safe to do so
- The sick person and anyone else in the same room should wear a medical mask.
- Get proper rest and sleep well
- Those with symptoms should stay isolated for 14 days (a minimum of 10

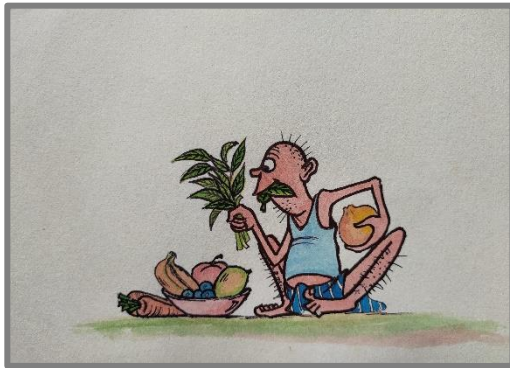
days after the first day they developed symptoms, plus another 3 days after the end of symptoms – when they are without fever and without respiratory symptoms).

- People who have been in contact with COVID – 19 patients stay isolated for a minimum of 10 days even if they do not have symptoms. If symptoms appear during these days, they also need to be isolated as described above.
- If COVID – 19 testing service is available, confirmation can be done. If you have any symptoms but have a “negative” test result by testing with a Rapid Diagnostic Test (RDT), continue to stay isolated.
- If you experience severe symptoms during isolation, contact a health care provider and seek immediate medical attention.

3. It is important to eating healthy and nutritious food.

- Eat a variety of foods within each and across all the three food groups in each meal of the day to ensure adequate intake of important nutrients.

(1) Energy giving food (carbohydrates) such as rice, flour, maize, potato, oil.



(2) Protective food (vitamins and minerals) such as fruits and vegetables.

(3) Body building food (protein) such as meat, fish, pulses, milk, eggs, and nuts.



- For easy digestion, eat soft food frequently (6 times a day).
- Drink water, fresh fruit juices, broth, soup and rice water for hydration.
- Take oral rehydration salt (ORS) if you have excessive sweating or diarrhea.
- Watch your intake of fat, sugar and salt and also beware of food hygiene.

4. What assessments should be taken for COVID – 19 suspected cases in isolation?

- Take body temperature. Normal body temperature is 98.6 F (37.5 C). Low grade fever is between 99.5 F (37.5 C) to 100.3 F (38.3 C).
- Measure pulse rate (normal pulse rate: 60 – 100 beats/ min). If you have a fever, your pulse rate may increase.
- Check your blood oxygen saturation by using a pulse oximeter. A healthy person has a blood oxygen level of 95% and above. If your blood oxygen level is below 95%, consult with a health care provider.
- If you have a history of diabetes and/or hypertension, test blood glucose and/ or measure blood pressure daily.



5. How to manage COVID – 19 mild to moderate symptoms at home?



- If you have fever or muscle/joint pain or headache, take paracetamol. (For adults: take Paracetamol 500 mg 1-2 tablets per time, not more than 4 times a day.)
 - If fever is not subsided, apply a cool, damp cloth to your forehead.
 - If have a high fever, take a sponge bath with water or a bath of lukewarm water to bring down temperature.
 - DO NOT TAKE antibiotics, steroids and other medicines without the advice of or prescription from a health care provider.
- Continue to take usual medications (eg. drugs for lowering blood pressure or lowering blood sugar) for underlying diseases.

6. Breast feeding mother can continue to breastfeed their babies even mother has COVID – 19 symptoms.

Transmission of active COVID-19 through breast milk and breastfeeding has not been detected to date, and there is no reason to avoid or stop breastfeeding.

- Mothers should follow infection prevention measures, washing hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or using a hand sanitizer containing 60% alcohol before and after breast feeding or touching the baby.
- Wear a medical mask during any contact with the baby, including while feeding (breast feeding).
- Babies should never wear any kind of masks.
- No sneezing or coughing over baby while breast feeding and touching or any contact.
- It is important that the breastfed mother has to drink adequately and eat nutritious food to replenish energy.

7. What should caregivers do?

- Caregivers and household members should wear a medical mask while in the same room with an ill person, and not touch their mask or face while taking care of the ill person.
- Wear disposable gloves when providing oral or respiratory care, and when handling stool, urine and other waste.
- Caregiver should wash their hands with soap and water regularly, especially:
 - before, during and after you prepare food
 - before and after caring for the ill person
 - before and after wearing gloves
- The ill person should have separate and dedicated dishes, cups, eating utensils, towels and bed linens. These should be washed with soap and water, and not shared with others.
- Frequently touched surfaces (eg. doors handle, light switches) should be cleaned and disinfected with 0.1% Hypochlorite solution at least daily.
- The waste from the ill person and caregiver should be packed in strong bags, closed completely before disposal and properly disposed.
- Contact a health care provider and seek immediate medical care if severe symptoms develop in the patient.

8. COVID – 19 and Blood oxygen saturation

When blood oxygen saturation (SpO₂) is lower, COVID-19 patients will suffer from a fatigue, difficulty in breathing or shortness of breath. The blood oxygen level should be measured at least 3 times per day with a pulse oximeter.

A normal healthy person has a 95% and above blood oxygen saturation.

(1) Continue to measure the blood oxygen level as mentioned above if it is 94% and above.

(2) If the blood oxygen saturation is between 90% and 94% --

- Prone positioning or lying in lateral position can substantially increase lung oxygenation. (See illustrations below for how to do this)
- Take supplemental oxygen therapy/ inhale supplemental oxygen (though if required) and if your health care provider suggests.
- When steroids are prescribed by a health care provider, strictly follow the instructions. DO NOT TAKE steroids on your own.

(3) If the blood oxygen saturation is less than 90%, this is severe COVID – 19 infection.

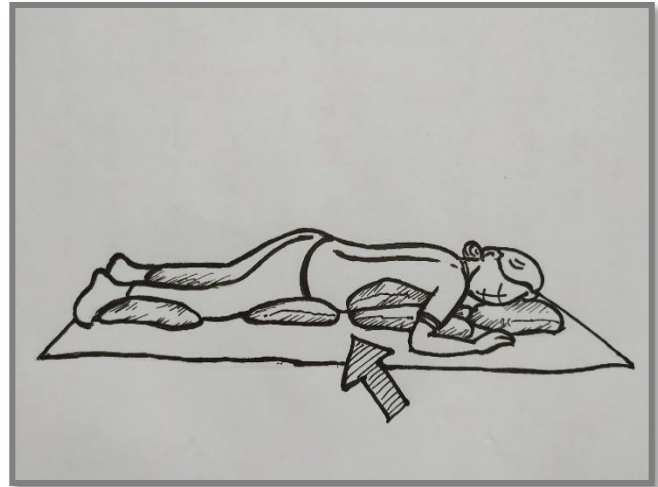
- Admit to hospital and seek immediate medical care after consulting with health care provider.
- Start supplemental oxygen therapy as instructed by the health care provider.
- Take Steroids and other medicines (eg. antibiotics, antiviral) as prescribed by the health care provider.
- Turn the patient's position every 2 hours; turn left and right, prone (sleeping on your stomach), supine (sleeping on your back), and sit upright if possible.

★ Seek urgent medial care if the patient shows the following regardless of the patient's blood oxygen saturation level:

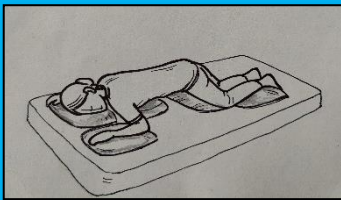
- Becomes significantly breathless
- Is not being able to get out of bed or stops peeing
- Develops a persistent pain or pressure in the chest (or) confusion (or) drowsiness (or) seems muddle

Awake proning

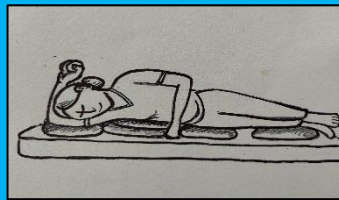
- Position 5 pillows as in the illustration.
 - 1 soft pillow for the head
 - 2 substantial pillows for under the chest
 - 1 substantial pillows for under the pelvis
 - 1 pillow for under the shin



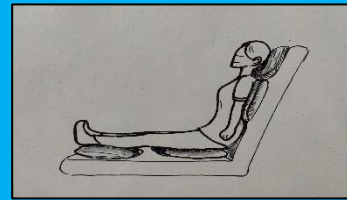
- The abdomen should hang free and not be compressed for easy breathing.
- Have the patient lie on lateral position and then prone on the pillow.
- Do not prone within 1 hour after eating.



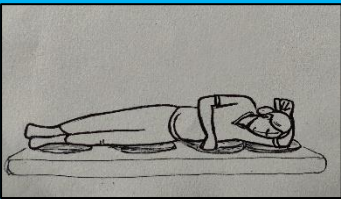
1. Begin by lying in prone position on a flatbed for 30 minutes to 2 hours



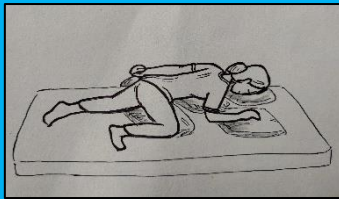
2. Switch to lying on your right side for 30 minutes to 2 hours



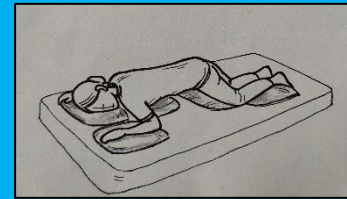
3. Switch to sitting up (30 – 60 degrees) for 30 minutes to 2 hours



4. Switch to lying on your left side for 30 minutes to 2 hours



5. Switch to semi-prone position for 30 minutes to 2 hours



6. Return to proning position for 30 minutes to 2 hours. Repeat the cycle.

9. Measure blood oxygen saturation level by using a pulse oximeter

- It can measure the blood oxygen saturation (SpO₂) and the pulse rate (PR)
- Take rest for 5-10 minutes and after that measure in sitting position.
- Do not measure when fingers are cold or wet. Warm the measuring finger.
- Attach the device at a tip of the thumb or middle finger. If necessary other fingers can also be used
- Press the button on the device and keep your hand still. Hold the device for 30 seconds to 1 minute.
- Read the result when the waves on the device are subsided
- It can be measured on toes of children if the hand is not stable.
- Asymptomatic hypoxia (low oxygen in your blood and tissue) known as silent hypoxia is common in COVID – 19 patients and SpO₂ need to be measured regularly.

Conditions in which blood oxygen saturation is incorrect

- Coloration at the fingertip (nail polish, applying fake nail or henna, tattoo, scar, discoloration due to heavy smoke).
- Movement at the time of measurement.
- Bright light falling on device while measuring.
- Carbon monoxide poisoning).
- Anaemia and other blood disorders.

References:

- World Health Organisation (WHO)
- Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), US Department of Health
- Medical Action Myanmar (MAM) - Brief Covid-19 Guidelines
- Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) - Nutrition Guidelines