



Role of Frontline Workers in Prevention and Management of CORONA VIRUS



As you know a new respiratory disease called COVID-19 is spreading across the world. India has also reported cases from states and the government is trying to contain the spread of the disease. As an important frontline worker, you play a major role in preventing its spread.

Your Role as a Frontline Worker is two-fold:

1. Spread key messages in the community about measures to prevent the infection.
2. Take actions for early detection and referral of suspected COVID-19 cases.

As a key member of the primary health care team, we want you and your family to be safe. Following the advice in this document will help you in staying safe.



What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a disease caused by the “novel corona virus”. **Common symptoms** are:

- ▶ **Fever**
- ▶ **Dry cough**
- ▶ **Breathing difficulty**
- ▶ Some patients also have aches and pains, nasal congestion, runny nose, sore throat or diarrhoea

About 80% of confirmed cases recover from the disease without any serious complications. However, one out of every six people who gets COVID-19 can become seriously ill* and develop difficulty in breathing. In more severe cases, infection can cause severe pneumonia and other complications which can be treated only at higher level facilities (District Hospitals and above). In a few cases it may even cause death.

* Source: WHO

How does COVID-19 spread?

- ▶ COVID-19 spreads mainly by droplets produced as a result of coughing or sneezing of a COVID-19 infected person. This can happen in two ways:
 - ◆ **Direct close contact:** one can get the infection by being in close contact with COVID-19 patients (within one Metre of the infected person), especially if they do not cover their face when coughing or sneezing.
 - ◆ **Indirect contact:** the droplets survive on surfaces and clothes for many days. Therefore, touching any such infected surface or cloth and then touching one’s mouth, nose or eyes can transmit the disease.
- ▶ The incubation period of COVID 19 (time between getting the infection and showing symptoms) is 1 to 14 days
- ▶ Some people with the infection, but without any serious symptoms can also spread the disease.

Which group of people are at higher risk of getting infected?



- ▶ People who have travelled to other countries in last 14 days and their family members.
- ▶ People coming from other states if they have been working with people who travelled to other countries in last 14 days.
- ▶ Family members and contacts of patients confirmed to have COVID-19.
- ▶ People older than 60 years of age and people with medical problems like high blood pressure, heart problems, respiratory disease/asthma, cancer or diabetes are at higher risk for developing serious complications..

Key messages to spread for prevention of COVID-19

1. How to avoid getting COVID-19 or spreading it?



a) Practice Social Distancing:

- ▶ **Avoid gatherings** such as melas, haats, gatherings in religious places, social functions etc.
- ▶ **Maintain a safe distance** of at least one Metre between you and other people when in public places, especially if they are having symptoms such as cough, fever etc. to avoid direct droplet contact.
- ▶ **Stay at home** as much as possible.
- ▶ **Avoid physical contact** like handshakes, hand holding or hugs.
- ▶ **Avoid touching surfaces** such as table tops, chairs, door handles etc.



b) Practice good hygiene

▶ Wash your hands frequently using soap and water:

- ◆ After coming home from outside or meeting other people especially if they are ill.
- ◆ After having touched your face, coughing or sneezing.
- ◆ Before preparing food, eating or feeding children.
- ◆ Before and after using toilet, cleaning etc.



Steps of hand washing

Duration 20 seconds



- ▶ While coughing or sneezing cover your nose and mouth with handkerchief. Wash the handkerchief at least daily
- ▶ It is preferable to **cough/sneeze into your bent elbow rather than your palms.**





- ▶ **Do not Spit or shout** in public places to avoid the spread of droplets.
- ▶ **Do not touch your eyes, nose and mouth** with unclean hands.
- ▶ Ensure that the surfaces and objects are regularly cleaned.

2. What to do if you are having symptoms or have travelled to other countries or states in past two weeks?

- Symptoms of COVID 19 and seasonal respiratory illness (common cold/flu) are similar. All people with these symptoms may not have COVID 19.
- Following persons should be quarantined for 14 days at home as a precaution:
 - ▶ People who have travelled to COVID 19 affected countries/areas in past 14 days
 - ▶ Those who have come in close contact with a suspected/confirmed COVID 19 patient
 - ▶ Those who develop symptoms
- These persons should inform you. If symptoms become severe then the person should visit a health facility after speaking with you.



For any COVID 19 related queries, call your State Helpline/Ministry of Health & Family Welfare's 24X7 helpline at 1075 or 011-23978046.

Your role in early detection and referral



- ▶ As a community worker you may be asked to prepare a line list of all people who have travelled to other countries or other states inside India in last 14 days:
 - ◆ Share their names with your Medical Officer at PHC but not with others
 - ◆ Teach them Home Quarantine for next 14 days
 - ◆ Tell them to monitor themselves for symptoms of COVID-19
 - ◆ Tell them to inform you if symptoms develop and call the COVID 19 Helpline



- ▶ **Instructions for the person being Home Quarantined**
 - ◆ Stay in a separate room at home, if possible with an attached/separate toilet. Try to maintain a distance of at least 1 meter from others
 - ◆ Wear a mask at all times. If masks are not available, take a clean cotton cloth, fold it into a double layer and tie it on your face to cover your nose and mouth
 - ◆ Use separate dishes, towels, bedding etc. which should be cleaned separately
 - ◆ The surfaces such as floor, table tops, chairs, door handles etc. should be cleaned at least once a day
 - ◆ Make sure that only one assigned family member is the caretaker



- ▶ **Instructions for the caretaker of the Home Quarantined person:**
 - ◆ Keep a distance of one metre when entering the room
 - ◆ Wear a mask or cover your face with double layered cotton cloth
 - ◆ Wash your hands after coming out of the room
- ▶ **How to use masks (or cloth covering the nose and mouth)**
 - ◆ Wash your hands before putting on the mask
 - ◆ Make sure that it covers both mouth and nose and is not loose.
 - ◆ Do not touch the mask from the front, touch only from the sides.
 - ◆ Make sure to wash your hands after changing the mask
 - ◆ Change the mask every 6-8 hours or when it becomes moist
 - ◆ If using disposable masks, have a dustbin with cover and a plastic bag lining to throw the masks in.
 - ◆ If using cloth masks, wash them at least daily

How to take care of yourself and carry on with your duties as a frontline worker?

- ▶ **Take all preventive measures** that you are talking about in the community such as keeping safe distance, washing hands frequently including before and after home visits. Carry your own soap if necessary
- ▶ If you are visiting or **accompanying a suspected case** to any health facility, make sure to cover both your mouth and nose with folded cloth or mask.
- ▶ If you are conducting community meetings or supporting outreach sessions the **groups should not be larger than 10-12 people.**
- ▶ Maintaining safe distances for those living in crowded areas or the homeless is going to be difficult. Even then you should inform them about preventive measures and support them as required.
- ▶ **Self-monitor** for signs of illness and report to the Medical Officer, immediately if any symptoms develop.
- ▶ **Ensure that you continue to undertake tasks** related to care of pregnant women, newborns and sick children, Post Natal Care, Breastfeeding and Nutritional Counselling, TB and NCD patient follow up while taking preventive measures.
- ▶ Remember older people are at higher risk, so take **special care to visit homes of elderly people.**
- ▶ **Continue to pay special attention to the marginalized,** as is your routine practice.
- ▶ Also as the people's trusted health worker, try to **reassure them** that while those with symptoms and high risk need close attention, for others, prevention measures will decrease the risk of getting the disease.

Myths vs. reality for COVID-19

As COVID-19 is a new condition, there are many common myths.

Myths	Facts
1. The corona virus can be transmitted through mosquitoes.	The corona virus CANNOT be transmitted through mosquito bites.
2. Everyone should wear a mask.	People who should wear a mask are: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Those having symptom of fever, cough etc.▶ Healthcare workers in facilities caring for ill people▶ The assigned care taker of a home quarantined person▶ Even those wearing masks should wash their hands frequently
3. Only people with symptoms of COVID-19 can spread the disease.	Even people with the COVID-19 infection but no symptoms can spread the disease.
4. Eating garlic and drinking alcohol can prevent COVID 19	Eating garlic and drinking alcohol DOES NOT prevent COVID 19

