

Guidelines for Mitigation Measures to Prevent Sufferings from Coronavirus Infection

A. Hotline Number of Directorate General of Health Services- 16263

B. Hotline Number of Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR)- 10655, 01550064901-5, 01401184551, 01401184554, 01401184555, 01401184556, 01401184559, 01401184560, 01401184563, 01401184568, 01927711784, 01927711785, 01944333222, 01937000011 and 01937110011.

C. Hotline Number of Governments Information Service- 333

This indicative guideline¹ is prepared with a view to suggest ways to mitigate the spread of infection at our home environment and help dealing with the COVID-19 crisis. This best practices guideline is not intended to be comprehensive and does not replace the guidelines prepared by the designated authorities of the Government of Bangladesh.

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¹These guidelines are prepared using both medical and non-medical information. Some of the suggestions although not scientifically proven yet, are put here for greater good of the health of the people. In order to keep it short, details are not mentioned.

1. Symptoms of COVID-19

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has been declared as pandemic by World Health Organization (WHO) on 11 March 2020. The numbers of patients in Bangladesh identified with Coronavirus infection are also in rise. According to the latest criteria all new flu-like symptoms should be regarded to be caused by Coronavirus unless proved otherwise. Following are some suggestive symptoms² of COVID-19 infection:

- **Fever (more than 99°F in armpit or under the tongue)**
- **Cough (dry or with sputum)**
- **Respiratory distress (tightness in the chest or breathing difficulty or shortness of breath)**
- Flu-like symptoms, such as fever, runny nose, sneezing, coughing, fatigue or undue tiredness, body ache, headache, itching in eyes, pain or irritation in throat
- Reduced desire for food and loss of taste
- Reduced sense of smell
- Nausea, Vomiting and Diarrhoea

The following guidelines are prepared keeping in mind that anybody can be infected by the virus and if infected what to do to mitigate all kind of sufferings. Since the virus is highly contagious, the best way to keep yourself safe is by stopping the transmission of virus.

2. Prevention

- A. The virus spreads from human to human. However, it may also be transmitted to human body, if the virus is transferred to eye, mouth or nose by any means. To prevent this transmission-
 - a. Stay Home, unless medically required to go out.
 - b. Maintain personal hygiene with frequent hand washing (20 seconds each time), shower, avoid touching eyes, nose or mouth by hands, ensure cleanliness of the household.
 - c. Practice social distancing (at least 1 metre or 03 feet distance from others).
- B. The virus may remain active or dormant on surfaces or household items for a considerable period. So far, scientists couldn't surely confirm as to the duration of such activity by the virus. Whatever may be matter, spread of transmission can be prevented by:

²The symptoms may occur alone or in combination. First three are vital but other symptoms may also be present. In case you have symptoms, consult doctors through different telephone/telemedicine services provided by Govt. and non-governmental organizations.

- a. Cleaning frequently touched surfaces and objects daily (e.g. tables, computers, phones, countertops, light switches, doorknobs, and cabinet handles³) using a regular household detergent and water.
 - b. Disinfecting these surfaces by using alcohol-based disinfectants or commercially available bleaches.
 - c. Not touching these surfaces as much as possible.
 - d. Frequent hand washing.
- C. Practising healthy lifestyles, taking balanced and nutritious diet can boost body's immune system to fight against this infectious disease. Please note the following:
- a. Control your underlying co-morbid conditions, e.g. diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, lung disease, kidney disease. If any change in the symptoms of the underlying conditions is seen recently even after following regular medical advice, please consult with Physician and take appropriate medicines⁴.
 - b. Take nutritious regular food with fruits and vegetables. Do simple physical exercise.
 - c. Drink plenty of water.
 - d. Have enough sleep (usually for an adult 6-8 hours should be enough)
 - e. Remain stress free.

3. Suspected COVID-19 infection

In case, you or any of your family members have one or more of the above mentioned symptoms, please follow step by step guidelines outlined below:

- A. DO NOT PANIC. In most cases the disease is self-limiting.
- B. Patients with mild illness are advised to stay at home and consult doctors through different telephone/telemedicine services provided by various Govt. and non-governmental organizations⁵. If the doctors suggest, do test for detection of Coronavirus.
- C. Stay strong. Monitor symptoms. Rest in home as self-isolation. Maintain distance from family members, stay in a single room if possible. Use separate household items. No visitor should be allowed at home.
- D. If self isolation is not possible at home due to lack of care givers, overcrowding or any other causes, visit hospital for institutional isolation.
- E. Strictly follow personal hygiene measures.
- F. Use masks. If you do not have masks, use any type of scarf.

³The list can be long.

⁴Regular medicines are available in pharmacies.

⁵The telephone numbers may be found in the website of Directorate General of Health Services or Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR). The useful telephone numbers are also annexed.

4. When to end home isolation⁶, if you are a suspected case

If you are suspected of having COVID-19 and are in isolation at home, you can stop isolation under the following conditions:

- A. If you are not being tested, upon consultation with a registered physician it is better to remain in self-isolation till 14 days have passed after the disappearance of flu-like symptoms.
- B. If anyone tested positive for Coronavirus infection and received treatment at hospital, still he/she should remain in home isolation for 14 days after discharge from hospital. If anyone tested positive for Coronavirus with mild symptoms and getting treatment at home, he/she should remain in self-isolation for 14 days after clinical recovery.

5. Protecting yourself

If you are tested positive, DO NOT PANIC. Stay strong. You have to fight the virus.

- A. By this time, you should have contacted with the registered physician through different telephone/telemedicine services provided by Govt. and non-governmental organizations. DO NOT allow visitors at your home and restrict the movement of your family members outside home. DO NOT listen to or believe any information regarding COVID-19 without checking with authentic source.
- B. Start taking medicines to reduce fever⁷ and cough⁸ and other symptoms.
- C. DO NOT take any potent pain killer, e.g. Ibuprofen, Diclofenac, Naproxen.
- D. Take plenty of water, eat regular food.
- E. Take rest.
- F. Continue to maintain hygiene as mentioned above.
- G. TAKE measures to prevent spread to others in the house.
- H. Maintain isolation in home. Use separate household items. If possible self-isolate in a separate room.
- I. Use masks. Keep the coloured side of the mask outside. Hand wash before and after changing mask each time. Do not touch the mask once it is put on. Take special precautions while disposing used mask.
- J. If you do not have masks, use any type of scarf.
- K. If possible wear gloves before touching utensils and wash hands after removing gloves.
- L. Wash your laundry thoroughly.

⁶However, you MUST contact with physician before taking a decision.

⁷You may take Tab. Paracetamol (500mg) - three times a day if there is fever.

⁸Antihistamines like Tab. Fexofenadin (120mg) - once daily at night may be used.

M. MONITOR your symptoms and signs. Seek for hospital admission, if you see following signs or symptoms:

- a. Breathing difficulty**
- b. Worsening of Cough and Fever**
- c. Confusion or inability to remain awoken**
- d. Extreme weakness or lethargy**

N. If you are in isolation in a separate room, clean surface as much as possible.

O. Do free hand short-duration exercise. But DO NOT exert yourself.

6. Protecting others

When you are sick, protecting others are also important. Please note the following:

- A. DO NOT allow visitors or household members in your self-isolation.
- B. Ask all members of the household to use mask.
- C. If you need to go out of your self-isolation place, you must use a mask or scarf, if mask is not available.
- D. Follow all above mentioned measures to prevent spread.

7. Caring for a sick person at home

- A. GIVE him/her moral support and keep them stress free.
- B. Use mask and gloves when you need to go closer to the sick person.
- C. Take all measures to prevent spread as mentioned above.
- D. Give symptomatic treatment for fever, cough etc. as mentioned above.
- E. Monitor signs and symptoms closely.
- F. **Look for signs mentioned in 5 M. Seek for hospital admission immediately if those signs appear.**

8. Coping skills

The COVID-19 is caused by a new strain of Coronavirus. No medication is available to treat the disease, neither there is any vaccine to prevent the infection. On top of that misinformation is flowing around to further add to our already stressful life. The measures mentioned above for prevention and care may as well cause stress. Nonetheless, we will have to motivate ourselves to practice all measures mentioned above. Protection motivation is a behaviour and we can reinforce this:

- A. Coronavirus or COVID-19 disease is a highly contagious infection. Coronavirus can cause severe infection and some of us are more vulnerable than others (especially for those who have underlying co-morbidities). However, social distancing and hygiene guidelines show that the efficacies of these are also high and

so is our self-capability to practise these guidelines (coping skills). If we can maintain a high coping appraisal, we will be motivated to maintain the behaviour that we are doing now.

- B. Distraction from the current unprecedented situation is very difficult, but not impossible. Let's try some.
- C. Maintain work life balance. This is perhaps the best time to practice it.
- D. Keep faith on Almighty. Believe, we can.