

Health Information on Covid 19 – SARS CoV-2

1) What is Covid – 19?

COVID- 19 is the disease caused by a kind of virus called coronavirus. Its specific name is SARS CoV-2. It is different from the virus that causes flu. It spreads fast. It is a new virus, so at this moment many of us may not have in-built ability to fight it. This virus is very contagious affecting both the upper and lower respiratory system of humans.

2) Who does it affect?

This disease affects everyone., regardless of age, gender, caste, religion, wealth status, geographic location, race, ethnic group, ability, profession. There is evidence indicating that children aged 0-14 are far less affected than other age groups. People with diabetes, heart problems, kidney problems, asthma, cancers Chronic Respiratory Diseases, are more easily affected by the virus.

3) Typical symptoms include:

- Sore throat
- Fever
- Dry Cough
- Bodyaches
- Headache
- Extreme weakness and Fatigue: Don't feel good
- Breathing difficulty
- Severe Diarrhoea

Usually the fever lasts 5-7 days, and then a person starts feeling better by Day 7. Or it can continue to Day 14.

Sometimes a person starts getting short of breath by between Day 3-5.

If the fever has not subsided in 3 days, the recommendation is that you immediately contact your ASHA worker/ ANM or any other government health worker, or call the helpline.

There are also some people, who may not show any symptoms, but could potentially be carriers of the virus.

4) How do we get it ?

The virus is present in the saliva droplets of an infected person, and enters you either

1) When you come in contact with the virus when an infected person, sneezes/coughs/spits., and then you inhale the virus.

or

2) Across the world today the primary way in which the virus is getting transmitted is via touch.

a) either physically touching a person (shaking hands, hugging,) who is potentially infected and then touching one's face(eyes, nose, mouth), or

b) touching the surfaces especially hard surfaces such as metal- door knobs, taps, glasses, utensils, agriculture implements etc , plastic which an infected person has touched, or on which infected saliva droplets have landed, and then touching ones face: eyes, nose, mouth. The virus is said to live on these surfaces for many hours and sometimes 2-3 days.

5) How do I protect myself, my family and my community ?

First thing is COVID -19 is in the community across vast parts of the world, and in India too it could very well be, so don't be scared. Remember that 80% of the people who are infected will not fall seriously ill.

Practical Tips:

- Keep your hands clean, Wash your hands as often as you can through the day with soap and water as the virus on our hands gets washed away. Dry your hands on a clean cloth or air dry them. Or Sanitize them with a hand sanitizer. As water is limited in our communities, definitely wash your hands after using the bathroom, before cooking food, before eating anything, after cleaning your baby or caring for a sick person. Wash between the fingers, the back of the hand and under your nails. Soap your hands for atleast 20 seconds each time.
- Do not touch your hands to your face- eyes, nose and mouth . Hands off your face! Wash your hands, then wash your face with soap and water, and then wash your hands again thereafter.
- Do not spit on the road.
- Sneeze or cough, into your bent elbow.
- Wearing a mask or handkerchief whilst outside your house, will not prevent you from getting the virus, but it can perhaps help you to stop touching your face.
- Stand at least at a 6 feet distance (2 arm lengths) from people . The reason is then even if you or the person is infected, you will prevent the transmission of the virus. You can implement this in your community for instance by drawing circles /boxes on the ground, at 6 feet distance to indicate where to stand. This can be done outside public spaces like a Kirana shop, Ration shop, etc.

- Do not attend social gatherings events or go to public spaces .
- Do not feel afraid of your neighbor. Do not be afraid of anyone in your community. Each of us can equally be infected and infect in turn. As long as you follow the rules we can all contribute to minimizing getting infected and in turn transmitting.
- Remember Home and Family transmission of the disease is maximum.

6) What do I do if anyone in my family falls sick with COVID symptoms ?

- If you or anyone in your family shows any of the symptoms of COVID or even normal cold/cough, it is best to make that person sleep in a separate room, and if possible use a separate bathroom.
- If it is not possible to sleep in a separate room, ensure that the sick family member sleeps in one part of the room with at least 6 feet separation between their bed and the rest of the room, where others are.
- Let the healthiest person in the family be the caregiver to the sick person. As family transmission is highest, minimize contact of the sick family member with other members.
- whilst taking care of them. eg. try not to take the temperature of the sick person. If possible, the person can take their own temperature using a thermometer. The sick person can wear a mask, when the caregiver goes in to give food/water. The care giver too must wear a mask, and ensure they wash their hands thoroughly and follow other rules (do not touch face, maintain the distance), after attending to the sick person.
- Rest, drink plenty of warm fluids, and DO NOT TAKE Ibuprofen. Take Paracetamol to lower the temperature. A good way to take care of your throat is to add some honey and lemon in warm water if you can. Gargle with warm saline water daily twice a day, which is a good preventive too.

When do I call the Covid health helpline?

- Call the local Covid Health Helpline-for advice, if you have the symptoms described and especially if the fever has not subsided after 3 days, and particularly if you feel breathless when you sit, or you walk to the bathroom.

Most important

No sick person or potential COVID -19 positive person, should be socially stigmatized. As long as we follow the rules (hand wash, do not touch hand to face, and keeping a 6 feet distance, after you touch surfaces which are commonly touched by the sick patient, sanitize/ wash your hands again with soap and water.) , we can prevent other family members from getting ill. Simply being in the same home with a COVID 19 person will not get you sick. It's the same precautions we have to take. The sick/ quarantined persons and families must be treated with dignity and empathy.

Vulnerable Populations: If there is any vulnerable person in your home (old person, somebody with heart problems, high blood pressure, chronic kidney diseases, diabetes, cancer, asthma), when there is a person with COVID

symptoms in the house, you could either move the vulnerable person to another house, to isolate that person from the COVID family member, or ensure there is strictly no contact between the caregiver of the Covid patient and the vulnerable person.

7) What is the purpose of this physical distancing and being at home?

The primary purpose is to prevent a large number of people from falling ill at the same time. This is because we just do not have enough hospitals, beds and facilities to provide health care to so many people at the same time. Hence by preventing the infection from spreading by physical distancing, we can slow the spread of the virus. So the number of people falling sick will not happen all together, but be spread out. In this way more number of sick people can get health care support. Hence each one of us, must contribute towards this for the public health of all the community.

8) I am scared about this disease.

Remember, only 10-20% of the people who get Covid 19 symptoms, require hospitalization. Of them only 1-3% require ventilators (support for breathing), and most recover with the care support. Hence ensuring the health care system is not flooded at one time, is very critical today.

Please do not fall prey to fake news and panic news that is being circulated in social media platforms. Please verify news before forwarding or acting upon it.

Helplines:

Telangana: 104

AP-0866-2410978