Guidelines

Social Distancing during COVID 19 Outbreak

Objective

To provide public with the guidelines regarding social distancing to break the transmission chain of the epidemic through person-to-person contact, thus reducing the risk of becoming infected during outbreak.

Rationale

Preventive measures play an important role in limiting the spread of a communicable disease. Such measures can help reducing the infection transmission and unnecessary burden on acute care facilities.

Procedure

- Stay home when there is no urgent need to go out.
- Avoid physical contact with others as much as possible e.g. handshakes.
- 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.
- If going out is necessary, keep a distance of two arm’s length (about 6 feet) from others.
- Do not leave home even when you are sick:
  - First call your doctor and follow his advice.
  - Stay in contact with others by phone or email.
  - Keep away from others when you or they are sick.
  - If you decide to stay home and one or more of the following symptoms appear, immediately report to your doctor:
    - Fever or
    - Cough or
    - Shortness of breath or trouble breathing
    - Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
    - New confusion or inability to arouse
    - Bluish lips or face
  - Make sure you have access to several weeks of medications and supplies in case you need to stay home.
  - Closely monitor your symptoms, if they prolong, immediately reach out to your health care provider for guidance.
  - If you become suspected for COVID 19, ensure home quarantine till there is a confirmed lab diagnosis. (Separate guidelines for Home Quarantine and Home Isolations)
- Stay informed about the local outbreak situation.
Avoid large and small gatherings in public spaces like restaurants, parks, libraries and other such venues to reduce the occurrence of transmission.

Avoid gatherings with friends and family within the home premises. Avoid having any unnecessary visitors.

Avoid unnecessary use of public transport.

Work from home using digital media sources.

Take care of the emotional health of your household members, including yourself.

Take everyday preventive steps:
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for 40-60 seconds. If soap and water are not available, rub your hands for 20-30 seconds with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains 60-80% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the bin.

Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces within home e.g. door handles, switchboards etc. (Separate Guidelines on Surface Disinfection)

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:

1. Public Health England, Guidance on social distancing for everyone in the UK

For more information, please contact:
HSA/ HPSIU/ NIH, PM National Health Complex, Islamabad
https://www.nih.org.pk/ https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCdYuzeSP4Ug1f__ZZKLDiYg