**Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) advice for the public**

**Stay aware of the latest information on the COVID-19 outbreak, available on the WHO website and through your national and local public health authority. Most countries around the world have seen cases of COVID-19 and many are experiencing outbreaks. Authorities in China and some other countries have succeeded in slowing their outbreaks. However, the situation is unpredictable so check regularly for the latest news.**

# Protecting yourself and others from the spread COVID-19

You can reduce your chances of being infected or spreading COVID-19 by taking some simple precautions:

* Regularly and thoroughly clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or wash them with soap and water. Why? Washing your hands with soap and water or using alcohol-based hand rub kills viruses that may be on your hands.
* Maintain at least 1 metre (3 feet) distance between yourself and others. Why? When someone coughs, sneezes, or speaks they spray small liquid droplets from their nose or mouth which may contain virus. If you are too close, you can breathe in the droplets, including the COVID-19 virus if the person has the disease.
* Avoid going to crowded places. Why? Where people come together in crowds, you are more likely to come into close contact with someone that has COIVD-19 and it is more difficult to maintain physical distance of 1 metre (3 feet).
* Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth. Why? Hands touch many surfaces and can pick up viruses. Once contaminated, hands can transfer the virus to your eyes, nose or mouth. From there, the virus can enter your body and infect you.
* Make sure you, and the people around you, follow good respiratory hygiene. This means covering your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze. Then dispose of the used tissue immediately and wash your hands. Why? Droplets spread virus. By following good respiratory hygiene, you protect the people around you from viruses such as cold, flu and COVID-19.
* Stay home and self-isolate even with minor symptoms such as cough, headache, mild fever, until you recover. Have someone bring you supplies. If you need to leave your house, wear a mask to avoid infecting others. Why? Avoiding contact with others will protect them from possible COVID-19 and other viruses.
* If you have a fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical attention, but call by telephone in advance if possible and follow the directions of your local health authority. Why? National and local authorities will have the most up to date information on the situation in your area. Calling in advance will allow your health care provider to quickly direct you to the right health facility. This will also protect you and help prevent spread of viruses and other infections.
* Keep up to date on the latest information from trusted sources, such as WHO or your local and national health authorities. Why? Local and national authorities are best placed to advise on what people in your area should be doing to protect themselves.

**Advice on the safe use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers**

To protect yourself and others against COVID-19, clean your hands frequently and thoroughly. Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer or wash your hands with soap and water. If you use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, make sure you use and store it carefully.

* + Keep alcohol-based hand sanitizers out of children’s reach. Teach them how to apply the sanitizer and monitor its use.
	+ Apply a coin-sized amount on your hands. There is no need to use a large amount of the product.
	+ Avoid touching your eyes, mouth and nose immediately after using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, as it can cause irritation.
	+ Hand sanitizers recommended to protect against COVID-19 are alcohol-based and therefore can be flammable. Do not use before handling fire or cooking.
	+ Under no circumstance, drink or let children swallow an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. It can be poisonous.
	+ Remember that washing your hands with soap and water is also effective against COVID-19.

Water, sanitation, hygiene, and waste management for the COVID-19 virus

The most important information concerning WASH and the COVID-19 virus is summarized here.

• Frequent and correct hand hygiene is one of the most important measures to prevent infection with the COVID-19 virus. WASH practitioners should work to enable more frequent and regular hand hygiene by improving access to hand hygiene facilities and using multimodal approaches (refer to Hand hygiene practices) to support good hand hygiene behaviour. Performing hand hygiene at the right time, using the right technique with either alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water is critical.

• Existing WHO guidance on the safe management of drinking-water and sanitation services applies to the COVID-19 outbreak. Water disinfection and sanitation treatment can reduce viruses. Sanitation workers should have proper training and access to personal protective equipment (PPE) and in many scenarios, a specific combination of PPE elements is recommended.

• Many health co-benefits can be realized by safely managing water and sanitation services, and by applying good hygiene practices.

**1. COVID-19 transmission**

**2. Persistence of the COVID-19 virus in drinking-water, faeces and sewage and on surfaces**

**3. Safely managing wastewater and faecal waste**

**4. Keeping water supplies safe**

WASH in health care settings

Existing recommendations for water, sanitation and hygiene measures in health-care settings are important for providing adequate care for patients and protecting patients, staffg and caregivers from infection risks.20 The following WASH-related actions are particularly important:

• engaging in frequent hand hygiene using appropriate techniques;

• implementing regular environmental cleaning and disinfection practices;

• managing excreta (faeces and urine) safely;

• safely managing health-care waste produced by COVID-19 cases.

**1. Hand hygiene practices**

**2. Sanitation and plumbing**

**3. Toilets and the handling of faeces**

**4. Safe management of health care waste**

**5. Environmental cleaning and laundry**

70% ethyl alcohol to disinfect small surface areas and equipment between uses, such as reusable dedicated equipment (for example, thermometers);

• sodium hypochlorite at 0.1% (1000 ppm) for disinfecting surfaces35 and 0.5% (5000 ppm) for disinfection of blood or bodily fluids spills in health-care facilities.

**6. Safe disposal of grey water or water from washing PPE, surfaces and floors**

**7. Safe management of dead bodies**

Considerations for WASH practices in homes and communities

**1. Hand hygiene general recommendations**

**2. Hand hygiene materials**

Water and soap **or** alcohol-based hand rub

• Ash or mud

• Water alone

**3. Water quality and quantity requirements for hand washing**

**4. Hand washing facility options**

Turning the tap on/off: either a sensor, foot pump, or large handle so the tap can be turned off with the arm or elbow

• Soap dispenser: for liquid soap either sensor-controlled or large enough to operate with the lower arm; for a bar of soap, the soap dish should be well-draining, so the soap doesn’t get soggy

• Grey water: ensure the grey water is directed to, and collected in, a covered container if not connected to a piped system

• Drying hands: paper towels and a bin provided; if not possible encourage air drying for several seconds

• Materials: generally, the materials should be easily cleanable and repair/replacement parts can be sourced locally

• Accessible: should be accessible to all users, including children and those with limited mobility.

## Protect yourself and others from getting sick

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