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All Line Ministry Heads of Institutions
All Provincial Directors/Regional Directors of Health

Operational Mechanism for home quarantining of individuals at high risk of COVID 19

Apparently healthy, high risk close contacts of COVID-19 patients require quarantining for 14 days from the time of risk exposure, to prevent the possible risk of transmission of the disease to others.

Individuals are home quarantined under the following circumstances.

1. Exposure to a patient confirmed with COVID 19 (Circular no: EPID/400/2019 n-COV)
2. On completion of 14-day quarantine period at a government/private cohort quarantine centre
3. On discharge from a hospital/ observation treatment centre, a symptomatic or asymptomatic confirmed COVID-19 patient or on discharge of a patient managed in a COVID-19 suspected ward/ isolation ward/ Unit (Circular no: DDG/LS/CV-GL/2020)

Further to the above, home quarantining can be considered in instances where exact exposure status cannot be ascertained but a possible exposure event is suspected when the population category, specific geographic location of the individual and other dynamics is considered.

- If the concerned individual is a first contact of a confirmed/highly probable COVID 19 patient the whole household should undergo home quarantine.
- If the concerned individual is discharged from COVID 19 treatment centre/ intermediate care centre/isolation ward or following completion of 14-day quarantine at a non-health quarantine centre, only the concerned individual should undergo home quarantine.

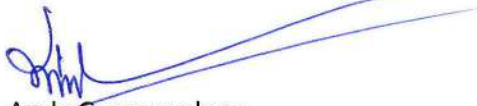
Steps to follow

- The Public Health Inspector (PHI) should visit the household and do an initial quick assessment. This assessment should identify the need for quarantining, persons to be quarantined and feasibility for home quarantining.
- Institutional quarantine to be considered in the following instances:
 - If a person is vulnerable to the severe forms of COVID-19 illness (e.g. Elderly, Immunocompromised persons etc.) is living in the same household, has to share common facilities such as the bedroom/ living room/ bathroom and the prevention of cross infection cannot be assured during home quarantine.
 - People living in boarding places and hostels / barracks and billets / lodges etc.
 - Socially and geographically identified special categories where proper home quarantine cannot be ensured.

- If the institutional quarantining is decided, for necessary arrangements, the Medical Officer of Health should convey this need through the Regional Epidemiologist to the Operation Centre at the Ministry of Health (0117966366).
- At the time of commencing home quarantine, the household members should be explained the process of home quarantine including the number of days to be quarantined, symptoms suggestive of a COVID 19 infection, and the need to continue any regular treatments the person is still on.
 - The symptoms of COVID 19 infection may appear at 5-6 days or may take as long as 12-14 days. The most common symptoms suggestive of a COVID infection are, fever, dry cough and tiredness. Less common symptoms are aches and pains, sore throat, diarrhea, conjunctivitis, headache, loss of taste or smell, a rash on skin or discoloration of fingers and toes.
- Individuals undergoing home quarantining must be informed regarding general health measures to be adhered during the quarantine period (Annex 1).
- The contact details of the MOH, PHI, Public Health Midwife (PHM), Grama Niladhari (GN), the local Police Station and any other officer as relevant should be given to the individual under quarantine by the PHI.
- Village Committees have been established at Grama Niladhari Division level that consists of the Grama Niladhari, Economic Development Officer, Agriculture Research and Production Assistant, Samurdhi Development Officer and Public Health Midwife.
 - It is their responsibility to visit quarantine homes at least once a day and ensure that quarantine persons are adhering to correct quarantine practices. They also should monitor whether any of the household members are developing symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 infection.
 - In addition, the general health and wellbeing of the person should be inquired and the needs of the individuals should be identified. The members should strictly adhere to precautionary measures during their visit.
- The Public Health Inspector of the area in collaboration with the Police and Sri Lanka Army shall visit each home preferably three times a day to ensure that home quarantine is practiced properly and also to ensure that all households are healthy and their needs are met.
- The Medical Officer of Health of the area should do the overall operation of this monitoring mechanism
- If the quarantined person or any other member of the household develops any symptoms suggestive of COVID 19, it should be informed to the MOH/ PHI/ PHM of the area immediately.
- If hospitalization is required, the PHI under the guidance of the MOH should arrange necessary medical care/admission communicating with the nearest hospital with isolation facilities. The individual should be transported by arranging 1990 ambulance service. The quarantined individuals also may seek medical advice by calling 0117966366 – COVID operations centre or 1999 hotline.
- Medicines should be provided uninterrupted for any individual under home quarantine currently on long term treatment for any specific illness. This should be arranged in liaison with the MO/NCD and the respective government hospital clinic.
- The Village Committee members should coordinate with the relevant hospital for getting down medicines for patients followed up at government hospital clinics
- If any Village Committee member brings a clinic book of a quarantined individual to a government hospital clinic, the patient should be issued medicines for one-month period from the clinic
- If medicines are delivered through the postal services, or if ordered via WhatsApp or Viber from private pharmacies an arrangement should be made to receive the delivery with zero contact. For example, a chair can be kept outside the house for the postman/delivery person to keep the medicines.

- If household members cannot order medicines via WhatsApp or Viber the Village Committee members should help to purchase medicines by coordinating with the pharmacy.
- There should always be no direct contact between postman/delivery personnel and quarantined individuals.
- The person under home quarantine should avoid contact with rest of the household and simultaneously the household members should take measures to avoid contact with the first contact under quarantine.
- The household members should avoid any physical encounters with outsiders during this period.
- If there is adequate space in the garden, the quarantined individuals may stay outside with the permission of the PHI, but they cannot have close encounters with the community.
- The MOH team should arrange for PCR testing according to the date of exposure. The testing date can be planned from 11th to 14th day, with the maximum effort to release from quarantine on completion of 14 days. If the quarantined individual is found positive, Immediate admission to a COVID-19 Hospital or Intermediate Observation Center depending on the age, availability of co-morbidities and presence/ absence of symptoms. The Regional Epidemiologist will coordinate this process.
- If COVID-19 confirmed case is identified among quarantined people, careful risk assessment has to be done by the MOH. Decision to extend the quarantine period for other members of the household will be taken under the guidance of Regional Epidemiologist, Consultant Community Physician/s and the Consultant Epidemiologist of the Epidemiology Unit.
- At the completion of the quarantine period, the MOH team should issue quarantine clearance certificate to the individual.

Please bring the contents of this guidelines to the notice of all relevant staff at your institution/district/province.


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Cc:
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Secretary Health
Additional secretary (PHS/MS)
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