



COVID-19 GUIDANCE FOR STAFF

Transmission

The initial route of transmission to humans remains unclear and is under investigation. COVID-19 is transmitted between people with **respiratory droplets** when an infected person coughs/sneezes **OR** by **touching contaminated objects or surfaces** and then touch your eyes, mouth or nose. After getting infected it takes around **2-14 days before presenting any symptoms**. This is so-called **incubation time**.

Symptoms

The main symptoms are **flu like symptoms** which include **fever, dry cough, shortness of breath and breathing difficulty**. Some also experience **sore throat, body aches, diarrhoea, lethargy and sudden loss of taste and smell**. Around 20% of reported cases globally are severe or critical. Most people experience mild or moderate symptoms. People with underlying health conditions appear to be at higher risk for severe disease.

Testing

Testing is available in **designated laboratories** and is becoming more widely available. Local health authorities might have a special criteria for testing according to case definition in the country. Person presenting flulike symptoms, or other suspected COVID-19 symptoms should contact their local health care provider for advice and assessment for testing. Staff health officers or a designated contact person for COVID-19, in your delegation or office, can provide you with relevant guidance and information on identified health facilities for testing

Treatment

There is no specific antiviral therapy against this disease available yet. Treatment is **supportive and on case by case basis**. **Medication to reduce symptoms** like fever and pain and to support and improve respiratory function might be provided.

Vaccinations

There is no available vaccine COVID-19. In general, IFRC is following the WHO recommendations related to any vaccinations. IFRC vaccination policy is, that no vaccinations are made mandatory for staff.

WHO recommends that all adults should have a Seasonal Influenza vaccination. In this situation the **Seasonal Influenza vaccination is strongly recommended** as it prevents from falling sick with seasonal influenza in case one catches the COVID-19 virus, which could make the combination lethal. In some countries the **vaccination against pneumonia is also recommended**.

Prevention

Preventative measures are advised to reduce the risk of infection. **Practise general good hygiene**. Employ regular **handwash** with soap and water and alcohol based (70%) **hand sanitizer**, keep **physical distance of 2 meters** (minimum 1m) from other people. Avoid **touching your face** and employ **safe food practises**.

Be informed on and follow the advice and regulations provided by the health authorities in the country you are staying in.

Face masks are only recommended for those who are taking care of a person with suspected COVID-19 infection and persons presenting respiratory symptoms who could expose others.

IF mandated by authorities to use mouth covering or home-made masks in public maximum compliance with hand hygiene and social distancing should always be applied. Follow instructions on how to use, take off and properly clean reusable mouth covers to reduce cross contamination

- 1 | **Keep physical distance of 2 meters whenever possible**
- 2 | **Avoid close contact** with potentially infected people. Avoid sharing food, drinks and personal items.
- 3 | **Wash your hands frequently with soap and water.** Carry hand sanitizer for use when soap and water are not readily available.
- 4 | Maintain good personal hygiene and practise basic respiratory etiquette. **Cover coughs and sneezes.**
- 5 | **Avoid touching your face**
- 6 | **Avoid direct contact with animals** (live or dead) and their environment.
- 7 | Keep informed on advice and regulations from your local health authorities and/or your Red Cross office
- 8 | Ensure food, including eggs, is **thoroughly cooked.**
- 9 | **Seek medical attention** if you develop symptoms, especially fever or shortness of breath.
- 10 | To prevent infection from any respiratory illness, pay attention to hygiene, and **avoid contact with sick people.**

Office

Please follow the advice on preventative measures in the office or delegation, they are for the staff protection and to reduce the risk of getting infected. Practise good hygiene, **wash your hands** regularly and use hand sanitizer if no water and soap is available. Keep **physical distance of 2m** for all interaction at the office. **Staff are expected, as always to stay at home if sick.** This is to respect each other's health and wellbeing. In general, if the sickness has continued for more than three days, one must provide a sick leave certificate issued by a medical doctor.

Travel

Travel restrictions are not recommended by WHO, **however**, it is advisable to **avoid any unnecessary travel.** Travel restrictions and closing off borders are active in many countries globally and international and local carriers for flights or other transport might not be available. It is advised to be informed about the current travel restrictions and local authorities' regulations and from your delegation before planning any travel inside or outside of the country you are staying in.

Do not travel if you are sick

You can find information on the various travel restrictions here: <https://www.thinkglobalhealth.org/article/travel-restrictions-china-due-covid-19>

If you get sick or feel unwell

Stay home if you feel sick or unwell. Inform you line manager and your designated contact

IF you develop symptoms that could possibly be caused by COVID-19, **follow the guidance** provided by your local health authorities or your delegation. **CALL** your local health care provider or medical hotline for further guidance and advice to follow.

Self-isolate if you have flulike symptoms, are waiting for COVID-19 test result and if you have been **diagnosed** with COVID-19 by laboratory test. Separate from others in a shared household and apply good hygiene and cleaning practices.

If you get sick with COVID-19

If your COVID-test result is laboratory confirmed as positive please follow the guidance given by your health provider for **isolation, home care or admission to a designated health facility.**

Please **inform staff health officer** or a designated **COVID-19 focal point** at your delegation about your test result so they can provide the appropriate support and guidance needed. Collection of **relevant information for contact tracing** purposes will be done according to WHO guidelines, within the workplace. This information might include when symptoms started and who at work you had been in contact with **1-2 days prior.**

Staff members who have been in close contact with an infected colleague **will be informed** and **should quarantine and observe their health for 14 days from the contact with the infected one.**

Staff member can return to the office when he/she has recovered from COVID and has been green lighted to return back to work by a medical doctor

NOTE that staff **confidentiality is always withheld**, and these measures are done to ensure the safety of staff members at the office or delegation and to support the staff as needed during their sickness and during the time of COVID-19 outbreak.

NOTE that guidance and regulations from **local health authorities should be followed** and they might differ between countries

Medical evacuation plan

All delegations should check that their medevac plan is up to date. The recommended hospitals and contact details should be checked. Should there be a situation that the delegate falls sick and needs a medevac, it will be done according to the insurance policy and the procedures of the emergency assistance company. It must be noted that some seconded delegates have a different emergency assistance provider than IFRC, which is International SOS. The situations might change rapidly.

Insurance

All staff must have an insurance that covers falling sick with COVID-19. Volunteers must have the volunteer insurance in all programs and operations as always. There is a separate document produced related to insurance coverage in this outbreak.

Quarantine

Some countries have issued strict quarantine measures. Please check what the guidance is from the Ministry of Health (or other authorities) in your country and the country you are travelling to. Please note that these restrictions and guidance may change rapidly.

In cases where staff after the (surge) mission is not allowed or able to return to their regular work immediately, there might be a reason to extend the contract accordingly.

Deployment

Delegates, surge, consultants and others deploying to support the COVID-19 operation in affected countries, **should be briefed on the current, known risks before travel** either face-to-face or over skype or other means. This is to ensure adequate understanding of the risks.

More information

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>




www.internationalsos.com and typing the Federation code **22AMMS000091**

For further advice you can contact Staff Health Officer Hannele Haggman:
+41 22 730 4417 or staff.health@ifrc.org



PROTECT YOURSELF AND OTHERS FROM GETTING SICK:

Reduce risk of coronavirus infection

-  Frequently clean hands by using alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water
-  When coughing and sneezing cover mouth and nose with flexed elbow or tissue - throw tissue away immediately and wash hands
-  Avoid close contact with anyone that has fever and cough

Source: WHO

Protect others from getting sick

-  Cover mouth and nose with tissue, sleeve or elbow when coughing or sneezing
-  Throw tissue into closed bin after use
-  Clean hands after coughing or sneezing and when caring for the sick

Source: WHO

Protect yourself and others from getting sick

Wash your hands:

-  after toilet use
-  after coughing or sneezing
-  when caring for the sick
-  before, during and after you prepare food
-  when hands are visibly dirty
-  before eating
-  after handling animals or animal waste

Source: WHO

Protect others from getting sick

-  **Avoid close contact** when you are experiencing cough and fever
-  **Avoid spitting** in public
-  If you have fever, cough and difficulty breathing **seek medical care early** and **share previous travel history** with your health care provider

Source: WHO

When to use a mask

-  If you are healthy, you need only to wear a mask if you are taking care of a person with suspected 2019-nCoV infection
-  Wear a mask if you are coughing or sneezing
-  Masks are effective only when used in combination with frequent hand-washing with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water
-  If you wear a mask then you must know how to use it and dispose of it properly

Source: WHO

Wash your hands

-  Wash your hands with soap and running water when **hands are visibly dirty**
-  If your **hands are not visibly dirty**, frequently clean them by using alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water

Source: WHO

Stay healthy while travelling

-  **Avoid travel** if you have a fever and cough
-  If you have fever, cough and difficulty breathing **seek medical care early**
-  Share previous travel history with your health provider

Source: WHO

Stay healthy while travelling

-  **Avoid close contact** with people suffering from a fever and cough
-  **Frequently clean hands** by using alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water
-  **Avoid touching** eyes, nose or mouth   

Source: WHO

Stay healthy while travelling

-  Eat only **well-cooked food**
-  **Avoid spitting** in public
-  **Avoid close contact and travel** with animals that are sick

Source: WHO

Stay healthy while travelling

-  When coughing and sneezing **cover mouth and nose** with flexed elbow or tissue - throw tissue away immediately and wash hands  
-  If you choose to wear a face mask, be sure to cover mouth and nose - avoid touching mask once it's on 
-  Immediately discard single-use mask after each use and wash hands after removing masks 

Source: WHO

Stay healthy while travelling

-  If you become sick while travelling, **inform crew and seek medical care early**
-  If you seek medical attention, **share travel history with your health care provider**

Source: WHO

Practise food safety

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- Even in **areas experiencing outbreaks**, meat products can be safely consumed if these items are **cooked thoroughly** and properly handled during food preparation

Source: WHO