



COVID-19 OUTBREAK: INFORMATION FOR MEETING PARTICIPANTS

BACKGROUND

Coronaviruses are a large family of respiratory viruses that cause diseases ranging from the common cold to the more severe diseases such as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). Although the current outbreak of COVID-19 is still being investigated, the virus appears to be moderately infectious and can be passed from human to human, primarily by droplet spread just like other respiratory viruses. While many cases will manifest as a mild illness, a small percentage progress to a more severe illness and pneumonia. For the latest situation update on the outbreak, see <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/situation-reports/>

PREVENTION AND GENERAL PRECAUTIONS

At present, influenza presents more risk to meeting attendees than COVID-19. The same guidance for influenza or any of the respiratory viruses also applies to COVID-19. The following are key prevention tips for you to pay attention to:

1. Avoid being exposed to respiratory viruses

- Avoid close contact (within 1 meter/3 feet) with people who are ill with fever, cough or respiratory symptoms.
- Wash or sanitize your hands frequently – this is one of the most effective measures available.
- Note that according to WHO, there is no evidence that individuals who are well and free from respiratory symptoms will benefit from wearing a mask.

2. Avoid spreading respiratory viruses if you are unwell

- Stay at home or in your accommodation if you become unwell, develop a fever or other respiratory symptoms.
- If you are unwell, inform the meeting organizer and arrange to get an assessment from a healthcare provider. It is best if you call the healthcare provider before visiting to inform them of your condition.
- Maintain your distance from others – at least 1 m / 3 feet.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a disposable tissue when coughing or sneezing and use the nearest waste receptacle to dispose of it after use. If you do not have a disposable tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow.
- Wash or sanitize your hands frequently – after coughing, before preparing food or eating, after toilet use, after contact with ill persons, and during exposure to high traffic public areas.

HEALTH CARE IF YOU ARE UNWELL

For respiratory illness: If you are unwell with fever, cough or other respiratory symptoms, you are most likely to have a more common illness – the common cold or even influenza – not COVID-19. Seek medical care, but first, always inform the meeting organizer and arrange to get an assessment from a healthcare provider. If you have fever, cough or respiratory symptoms AND you have been to a high-risk location or cared for someone with COVID-19, you may be considered a suspect COVID-19 case. Ensure that you tell the organizers or any responding medical personnel of your travel history.

If you or other participants in the meeting room are unwell: Organizers will coordinate and help you on how to get access to medical care. They will also advise on any necessary cleanup in the meeting room.

For medical emergencies: You should inform the meeting organizer and they will connect you or provide you with the contact number of the local health authority or paramedics.

For all other medical care: If you are in your duty station, contact your duty station clinic for consultation. If you have any other health care needs, from needing replacement medication to being unwell, you should go to a local urgent care clinic, or inform the organizer who may be able to provide you with contacts or the location of a local healthcare provider or pharmacy



SPECIFIC MEASURES BEFORE & DURING THE MEETING

BEFORE THE MEETING

- Review this “Information for Meeting Participants’ package (including the accompanying brochures) and be aware of the signs and symptoms of respiratory illness and how to manage it.
- Ensure that you have your health insurance card or information with you at all times
- It is preferred that you get vaccinated for influenza.
- Bring additional routine medications, spare contact lenses or spectacles, etc.

DURING THE MEETING

- Strictly do not attend the meeting if you are unwell, have a fever, cough or respiratory symptoms.
- Undertake regular preventive measures such as cough etiquette and regular handwashing as described in the brochures provided.
- Contact the meeting organizer and local duty station clinic if you are unwell AND have also been to a location with widespread coronavirus outbreak in the last 14 days.

FAQ’S FOR MEETING PARTICIPANTS

I have an important role or presentation to make, and I am unwell. What should I do? You should not attend the meeting. Speak with the organizers who should have videoconference arrangements in place so that you can attend or deliver presentations remotely.

Another participant is coughing and unwell. What should I do? The first step is to keep your distance, at least 1 m / 3 feet, from them. If appropriate, encourage the person to avoid others and to seek advice from a healthcare provider.

Another participant is coughing and unwell AND I have confirmed information that they have recently been in a country with a widespread COVID-19 outbreak. What should I do? If and only if you believe that there is a risk to other participants, speak with the meeting organizers who have been given advice from the medical service on what to do.

In the event I need to be ‘quarantined’, what does this mean? This may be required if you are unwell, and really means 3 key things in practice. You should:

- Avoid contacts by staying in your accommodation and keeping at least 1 m / 3 feet away from others.
- Minimize the spread of virus particles by covering your cough, cleaning surfaces, and washing or sanitizing your hands regularly.
- Seek care or medical advice by phone first *before* seeing a healthcare provider in person.

Will there be hand sanitizer available? Generally, yes. Organizers should have arranged to have hand sanitizer available, although simple handwashing is equally (if not more) effective.

Should I or other participants who are well wear face masks? No. According to the WHO, there is no benefit for individuals who are well and free from respiratory symptoms to wear face masks. We discourage their use, except if it is a mandatory requirement by the host country authorities. Masks may even increase the spread of the virus because they are touched/adjusted so often.

Is there other information available? Yes. The information provided in this brief is enough to manage most concerns. However, for further information, we advise that you refer only to reputable and up to date sources. We encourage you to review the ‘Travel Advice’ and ‘Protect Yourself’ sections in the World Health Organization website which is constantly updated to reflect the most recent information.

WHO COVID-19 Webpage - <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

UN COVID-19 Staff Webpage - <https://hr.un.org/page/coronavirus-disease-covid-19>

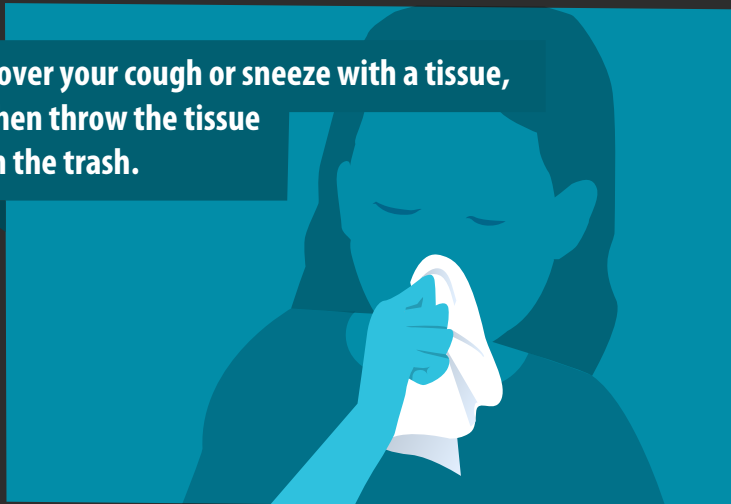
STOP THE SPREAD OF GERMS

Help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases like COVID-19.

Avoid close contact with people who are sick.



Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.



Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.



Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.



Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.



Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.



General recommendations subject to review following new information or guidance.

The following interim guidance has been developed for WHO personnel returning from a location/ situation presenting a reasonable risk of exposure to Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV). In light of remaining gaps in our knowledge about the transmissibility and severity of 2019-nCoV and new cases of travel-related infection, WHO advises a precautionary approach for people returning from areas reporting community transmission.

How is 2019-nCoV spread?

It is not clear yet how easily 2019-nCoV spreads from person-to-person. When person-to-person spread has occurred with other coronavirus infections like MERS and SARS, it is thought to have occurred mainly via respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes, similar to how influenza and other respiratory pathogens spread. Spread of MERS and SARS between people has generally occurred between close contacts. The maximum incubation period (i.e. the time from infection to the onset of symptoms) is 14 days based on Chinese data. Symptoms may occur as early as 1 day after exposure to a case of 2019-nCoV.

How can I prevent from getting infected with 2019-nCoV?

WHO's standard recommendations for the general public to reduce exposure to and transmission of a range of illnesses are as follows, which include hand and respiratory hygiene (see Annex), and safe food practices.

- Frequently clean hands by using alcohol-based hand rub (for 20-30 seconds) when hands are not visibly soiled or soap and water (for 40-60 seconds) when hands are soiled;
- When coughing and sneezing cover mouth and nose with flexed elbow or tissue – throw tissue away immediately in a closed bin and wash hands;
- Avoid close contact with anyone who has fever and cough;
- Perform hand hygiene after having contact with respiratory secretions and contaminated objects or materials (see Annex).
- If you have fever, cough and difficulty breathing seek medical care early and share previous travel history with your health care provider;
- When visiting live markets in areas currently experiencing cases of novel coronavirus, avoid direct unprotected contact with live animals and surfaces in contact with animals;
- The consumption of raw or undercooked animal products should be avoided. Raw meat, milk or animal organs should be handled with care, to avoid cross-contamination with uncooked foods, as per good food safety practices.
- See WHO advice on the use of masks here: [https://www.who.int/publications-detail/advice-on-the-use-of-masks-the-community-during-home-care-and-in-health-care-settings-in-the-context-of-the-novel-coronavirus-\(2019-ncov\)-outbreak](https://www.who.int/publications-detail/advice-on-the-use-of-masks-the-community-during-home-care-and-in-health-care-settings-in-the-context-of-the-novel-coronavirus-(2019-ncov)-outbreak)

For all WHO personnel returning from a location/ situation presenting a reasonable risk of exposure to Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV):

- **It is mandatory to contact Staff Health & Wellbeing Department (SHW) in HQ or Regional Medical Services for a risk assessment.**
- Monitor yourself for signs/symptoms of illness – including regular temperature checks – for 14 days after return from travel.
- During the 14 days, if you are experiencing any symptoms (fever, cough, or difficulty breathing etc.), **seek medical care immediately and do not come to work while sick.**
 - ⇒ Before you go to a doctor's office or emergency room, call ahead and tell them about your recent travel and your symptoms. If you are advised to seek medical care, wear a medical mask when you go to doctor's office/emergency room.
 - ⇒ Call or email SHW in HQ or Regional Medical Services, and inform your manager.
- Comply with local public health laws and regulations.

General recommendations subject to review following new information or guidance.

Clinical care of suspected patients with 2019-nCoV should focus on :

- Early recognition (see WHO 2019-nCoV clinical guidance <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/technical-guidance/patient-management>)
- Immediate isolation (separation),
- Implementation of appropriate Infection Prevention and Control measures ([https://www.who.int/publications-detail/infection-prevention-and-control-during-health-care-when-novel-coronavirus-\(ncov\)-infection-is-suspected](https://www.who.int/publications-detail/infection-prevention-and-control-during-health-care-when-novel-coronavirus-(ncov)-infection-is-suspected)), and
- Provision of optimized supportive care.

Important contacts:

Please contact SHW in HQ or the Medical Services in your region for more information or advice on health and wellbeing.

WHO Staff Health & Wellbeing Department HQ Geneva		
Emergency Contact 24h 7/7	shwemergency@who.int	+41 22 791 11 15
SHW Director: Dr CROSS, Caroline	crossc@who.int (please copy shws@who.int)	+41 22 791 3040 13040 (GPN number)
Staff Counsellor: Ms CASALIS, Nathalie	casalish@who.int	+41 22 791 3231 13231 (GPN Number)
Staff Psychologist: Ms MURINO, Eva	murinoe@who.int	+41 22 791 30 40 12315 (GPN Number)
WPRO Regional Medical Services		
Regional Staff Physician: Dr BAUTISTA, Marcia	bautistal@who.int	+63 2 8 5289620 89620 (GPN number)
Clinical Nurse: Mrs. ROMERO, Abigail	romeroab@who.int	+63 2 8 5289621 89621 (GPN number)
EURO Regional Medical Services		
Regional Staff Physician: DR DONDOGLIO, Pierre-Olivier	dondogliopi@who.int	+4545336816 76816 (GPN number)
Clinical Nurse: MS. ELMER, Jeanett	elmerj@who.int	+4545336661 76661 (GPN number)
AFRO Regional Medical Services		
Regional Staff Physician: Dr RIZET, Roland	rizetro@who.int	+4724139959 39959 (GPN number)
Clinical Nurse: MRS. TRAORE, Minata	traoremi@who.int	+4724139461 39415 (GPN number)
AMRO Regional Medical Services		
Regional Staff Physician: Dr SELOD, Anne-Gaelle	selodann@paho.org	+1 202-974-3904
Clinical Nurse: MRS. CORCUERA, Norma	corcuernor@paho.org	+1 202-974-3392
EMRO Regional Medical Services		
Regional Staff Physician: DR MAKLAD, Sahar	maklads@who.int	+20-2-22765207 65207 (GPN number)
Clinical Nurse: MS. ELBAKRY, Maha	elbakrym@who.int	+202 227 65208 65208 (GPN number)
SEARO Regional Medical Services		
Regional Staff Physician: Dr SOBTI, Rohit	sobtir@who.int	+911143040135/+911143040136 26135 (GPN number)
Clinical Nurse: MRS. TRIPATHI, Indira	tripathii@who.int	+911123370804 26136 (GPN number)

Editor

Consultant, Catherine GLASS
HQ/BOS/SHW

Verifier

Director, Dr Sylvie BRIAND, HQ/WPE/GIH
Scientist, Dr Maria VAN KERKHOVE,
HQ/WPE/GIH/EZD

Approval

Director, Dr Caroline CROSS
HQ/BOS/SHW

Effective Date: 03 February 2020

To replace 31 Jan 2020 Version

Contact: shws@who.int

Review : Subject to regular review

General recommendations subject to review following new information or guidance.

Annex 1: Preforming hand hygiene - How to hand rub

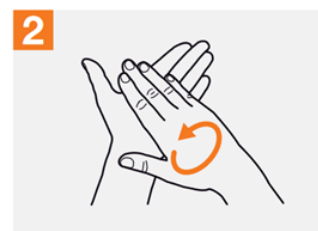
Rub hands for 20–30 seconds - apply enough product to cover all areas of the hands; rub all surfaces until dry.

RUB HANDS FOR HAND HYGIENE! WASH HANDS WHEN VISIBLY SOILED

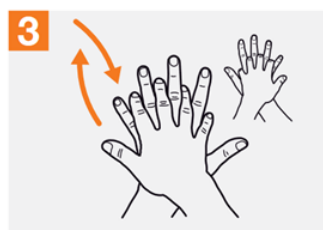
 **Duration of the entire procedure: 20-30 seconds**



1a Apply a palmful of the product in a cupped hand, covering all surfaces;



2 Rub hands palm to palm;



3 Right palm over left dorsum with interlaced fingers and vice versa;



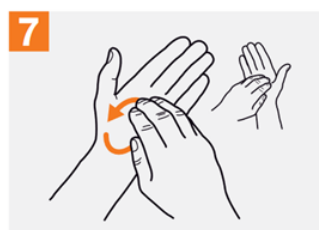
4 Palm to palm with fingers interlaced;



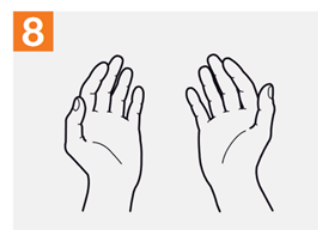
5 Backs of fingers to opposing palms with fingers interlocked;



6 Rotational rubbing of left thumb clasped in right palm and vice versa;



7 Rotational rubbing, backwards and forwards with clasped fingers of right hand in left palm and vice versa;



8 Once dry, your hands are safe.

General recommendations subject to review following new information or guidance.

Annex 2: How to hand wash

Wash hands for 40–60 seconds - wet hands and apply soap; rub all surfaces as per diagrams above; rinse hands and dry thoroughly with a single use towel; use towel to turn off faucet.

WASH HANDS WHEN VISIBLY SOILED! OTHERWISE, USE HANDRUB

 **Duration of the entire procedure: 40-60 seconds**



Wet hands with water;



Apply enough soap to cover all hand surfaces;



Rub hands palm to palm;



Right palm over left dorsum with interlaced fingers and vice versa;



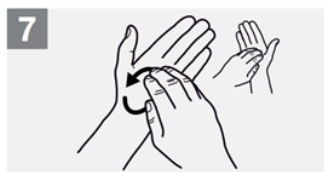
Palm to palm with fingers interlaced;



Backs of fingers to opposing palms with fingers interlocked;



Rotational rubbing of left thumb clasped in right palm and vice versa;



Rotational rubbing, backwards and forwards with clasped fingers of right hand in left palm and vice versa;



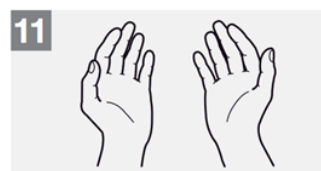
Rinse hands with water;



Dry hands thoroughly with a single use towel;



Use towel to turn off faucet;



Your hands are now safe.

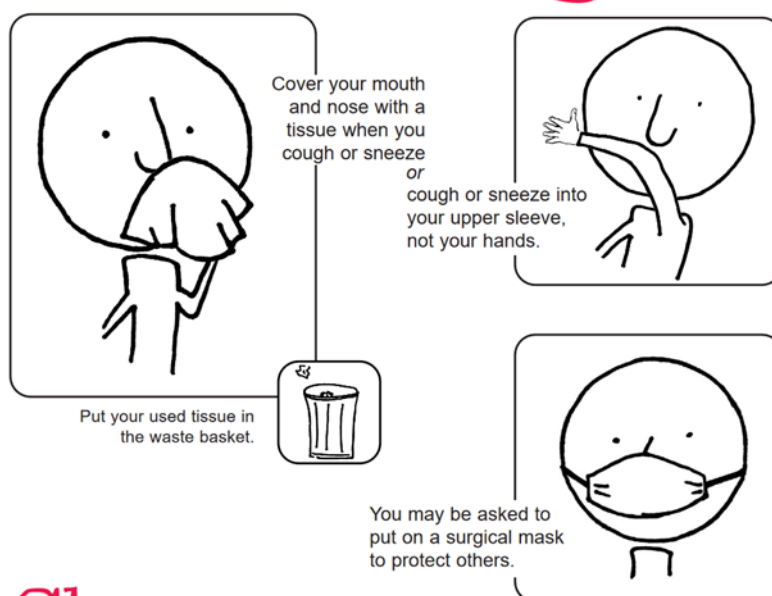
General recommendations subject to review following new information or guidance.

Annex 3: Respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette

Cover nose and mouth with a disposable towel or elbow when coughing/sneezing. Dispose of used towels in a closed bin and wash hands as above.

Stop the spread of germs that make you and others sick!

Cover your Cough



**Clean
your
Hands**
after coughing or sneezing.



or

