

# COPING WITH COVID

## A GUIDE TO MANAGING MILD COVID-19 DISEASE AT HOME

Dr Aysha Kola and  
Dr Waasila Jassat

# WHAT ARE COVID-19 SYMPTOMS?

- fever
- new continuous cough
- shortness of breath
- tiredness
- muscle aches

- congestion or runny nose
- headaches
- sore throat
- loss of taste/smell
- nausea or vomiting
- diarrhoea



cough



fever



shortness  
of breath

**IF YOU ARE  
DIAGNOSED  
WITH  
COVID-19,  
OR IF YOU  
HAVE  
SYMPTOMS  
BUT  
CANNOT  
GET TESTED**

**WHAT  
SHOULD  
YOU DO?**

- Do stay at home for 14 days
- Do stay calm
- Do ensure you have family members on hand who can help you to get shopping and things you may need
- Do keep connected to people you care about by phone and video calls

- Do not go to work
- Do not use public transport
- Do not go to public places
- Do not go shopping
- Do not visit anyone
- Do not attend religious gatherings
- Do not have visitors in your home
- Do not leave home unless you need medical care

# IF YOU HAVE COVID-19, HOW SHOULD YOU ISOLATE?

Separate yourself from other people in your home, in a well-ventilated bedroom. Your family should not stay or sleep in the same room as you.

Use a separate bathroom. If you have to share a bathroom, clean after every use.

Avoid sharing items and the same spaces with other people and clean surfaces often.

Stay at least 1.5 metres (3 steps) away from other people in the home.

Wear facemasks to help prevent the spread of the disease to others.

Cough or sneeze into the fold of your elbow. Alternatively, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and dispose of tissue in a dedicated bin.

Clean your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or with alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains 60-95% alcohol.

# WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE?

## ISOLATION

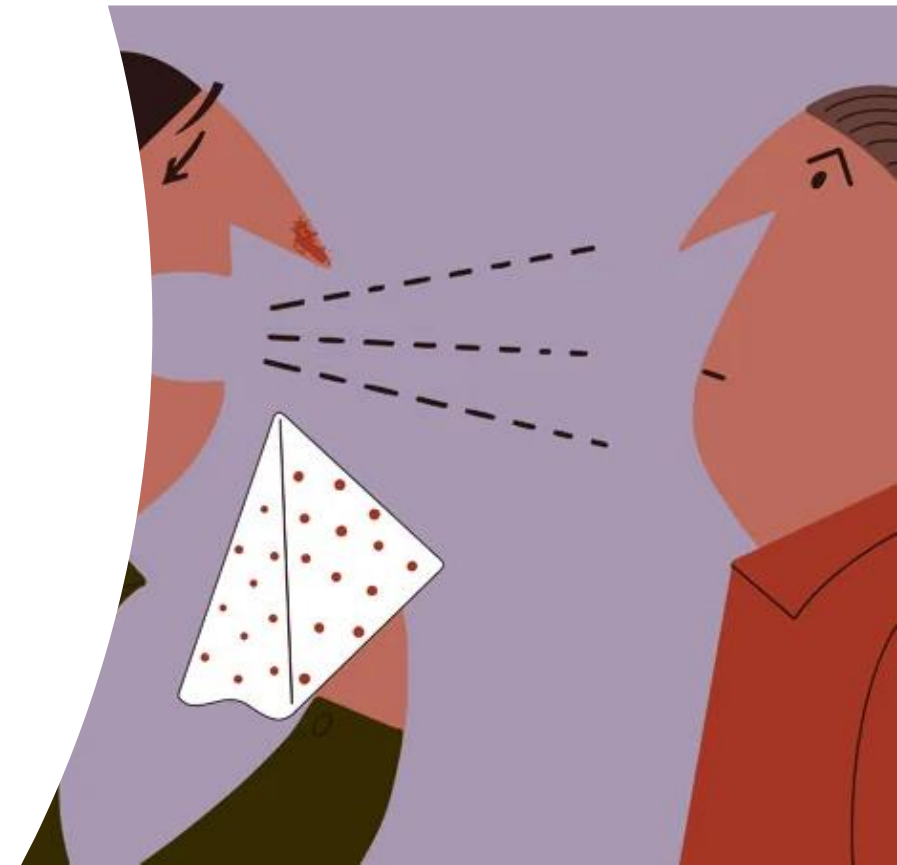
- You have tested positive for the virus or you have symptoms and likely have COVID-19
- You need to avoid contact with other people for
  - 14 days after your test if you have no symptoms
  - 14 days after your symptoms started if you have mild disease
  - 14 days from the last day you needed oxygen if you were treated in hospital with severe disease
- You do not need to re-test to confirm you are negative to de-isolate

## QUARANTINE

- You have been in close contact with someone with the virus and you don't have symptoms and haven't tested positive
- You need to avoid contact with other people for 14 days after your exposure to the person with COVID-19
- If you do not develop symptoms you can de-isolate after 14 days
- If you develop symptoms you are considered to also have COVID-19 and then you need to isolate for 14 days from the start of your symptoms

# WHAT IS A CLOSE CONTACT?

- Face-to-face encounter with a probable or confirmed case
- Within less than one meter
- For more than 15 minutes
- Both were not wearing masks



# WHO IS AT GREATEST RISK FOR SEVERE DISEASE?

- older than 60 years
- overweight
- unfit
- multiple medical conditions
- medical conditions not well controlled



- hypertension
- diabetes
- chronic kidney, heart and lung disease
- cancer
- HIV
- TB

# IF YOU ARE HIGH RISK, MONITOR YOURSELF CLOSELY


- Make sure your underlying medical conditions are well controlled. Take your hypertension, diabetes and other medicines correctly and on time.
- Monitor your blood pressure and sugar. If you are diabetic it is a very good idea to get a home device to measure your sugar.
- Consider getting a pulse oximeter. This is an easy-to-use device which measures the oxygen saturation (level) in your blood and helps to identify early on when you are in need of medical attention.



**Oxygen saturation should always be greater than 92%**



# STRENGTHEN YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM

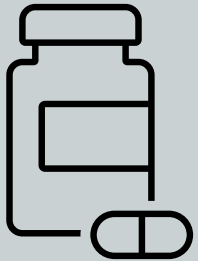
- Eat healthy meals, drink water, sleep well, get plenty of rest but also remember to stay active.
- Stop smoking! 
- Take the following :
  - vitamin D 50 000 iu once off
  - zinc 200mg daily for 5 days
  - vitamin C 500mg three times per day for 5 days
  - vitamin B complex 1 tablet daily



# USE THE USUAL COLD AND FLU REMEDIES TO RELIEVE SYMPTOMS



- Take Panado for fever and pain
- Drink warm honey and lemon water or use lozenges to relieve sore throats
- Do warm water and salt gargles twice daily
- Steam or use a humidifier with eucalyptus or Vicks as dry air is not good for your lungs
- Traditional remedies like black seed, turmeric, ginger and other natural substances known for their anti-inflammatory properties are not harmful and may help



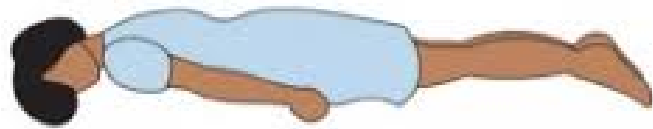
Do not take steroids or hydroxychloroquine, or any medicines you may have heard about in the media.

Many of these treatments have not been proven to work or are used for seriously ill patients who are being treated in hospital.

# FEEL A LITTLE SHORT OF BREATH?



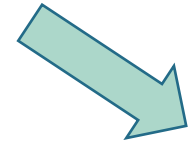
- Sleep on your stomach for as much as possible with your head turned to the side (prone position)
- It helps to prop a pillow lengthwise underneath your head and chest for this
- You can also cycle between laying on your belly, on your side and sitting up



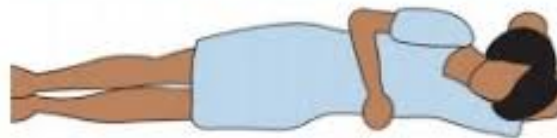
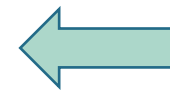
1. 30 minutes – 2 hours: laying on your belly



2. 30 minutes – 2 hours: laying on your right side



3. 30 minutes – 2 hours: sitting up



4. 30 minutes – 2 hours: laying on your left side



# BREATHING EXERCISES CLEAR YOUR LUNGS AND IMPROVE OXYGEN FLOW

**The idea is to get the lower part of your lungs to expand so that any mucus that's collecting there can be dislodged and coughed out**

## DEEP BREATHING and FORCED EXPIRATION

Take a deep breath in through the nose.

At the end of it, hold your breath for five seconds.

Then breathe out through the mouth.

Do this five times - five breaths total.

Next, take a sixth deep breath in, then at the end of it cough strongly, covering your mouth when you do so.

The six breaths plus cough at the end represent once cycle. Repeat this cycle twice.

## PURSED-LIP BREATHING

Breathe in through your nose and breathe out at least twice as long through your mouth, with pursed lips.

## BELLY BREATHING

Lie on your back. Bend your knees.

Breathe deeply through your nose, allowing your chest and belly to expand.

Breathe out through your mouth at least twice as long as your inhale.

Perform for 1 minute.

Then, rest for 30 seconds.

## BALLOON BLOWING

You can also blow up a balloon as breathing against resistance helps to expand the chest.

# WHEN SHOULD YOU SEEK MEDICAL HELP?



- If your symptoms are worsening or have not improved after 7 days
- If you become confused or have difficulty concentrating
- If you develop a new fever or your fever returns
- If you develop chest pain
- If you are diabetic and your sugar level is very high ( $>18$ ) or very low ( $<3.5$ )
- If your breathing becomes difficult, and the number of breaths you take in one minute (respiratory rate) is more than 25
- If your oxygen level on the pulse oximeter is lower than 92%

**Do not go to your GP's rooms**

**Call the doctor or arrange a virtual medical consultation**

**Or call an ambulance and go to the hospital**