Role of Frontline Workers
## in Prevention and Management of
CORONA VIRUS

As you know a new respiratory disease called COVID-19 is spreading across the world. India has also reported cases in various states and the government is trying to contain the spread of the disease. You as an important frontline worker can play a major role in this and prevent COVID-19's spread in the community.

Your Role as a Frontline Worker

As a community worker, your role is two-fold:

1. To spread key messages in the community about measures people can take to prevent the infection.
2. To take actions for early detection and referral of suspected COVID-19 cases.

To help you do these two functions, below is a summary of important information on COVID-19 and your role in preventing its spread.
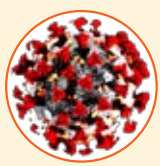
What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a disease caused by the "novel corona virus". Its most common **symptoms** are:

- **Fever**
- **Dry cough**
- **Breathing difficulty**
- Some patients also have **aches** and **pains, nasal congestion**, **runny nose**, **sore throa**t or **diarrhoea**

About 80% of confirmed cases recover from the disease without any serious complications. However, one out of every 6 people who gets COVID-19 can become seriously ill* and develop difficulty in breathing. In more severe cases, infection can cause severe pneumonia and other complications which can be treated only at higher level facilities (District Hospitals and above) and in a few cases it may even cause death.

* Source: WHO

How does COVID-19 spread?

- COVID-19 spreads mainly by droplets as a result of coughing or sneezing of a COVID-19 infected person. This can happen in two ways:

  - **Direct close contact:** one can get the infection by being in close contact with COVID-19 patients (within 1 Metre of the infected person), especially if they do not cover their face when coughing or sneezing.

  - **Indirect contact:** the droplets survive on surfaces and clothes for many hours. Therefore, touching any such infected surface or cloth and then touching one's mouth, nose or eyes can transmit the disease.

- Some people with the infection, but without any serious symptoms can also spread the disease.

Which group of people are at higher risk of getting infected?

- People who have travelled to other countries in last 14 days and their family members.
- People coming from other states if they have been working with people who travelled to other countries in last 14 days.
- Family members and contacts of patients confirmed to have COVID-19.
- People older than 60 years of age and people with medical problems like high blood pressure, heart problems, respiratory disease/asthma, cancer or diabetes are also at higher risk.

Myths vs. reality for COVID-19

As COVID-19 is a new condition, there are many common myths.

Myths	Facts
1. Everyone who gets COVID-19 becomes seriously ill or dies.	**One in 6** infected can become seriously ill. People over 60 years or having existing illnesses are more at risk.
2. The corona virus can be transmitted through mosquitoes.	The corona virus **CANNOT** be transmitted through mosquito bites.
3. Everyone should wear a mask.	People who should wear a mask are: - Those having symptom of fever, cough etc. - Healthcare workers in facilities caring for ill people - Those caring for an ill person - Close family contacts of suspects /confirmed cases
4. Only people with symptoms of COVID-19 can spread the disease.	Even people with the COVID-19 infection but no symptoms can spread the disease.

Key messages to spread in the community for prevention of COVID-19

1. How to avoid getting COVID-19 or spreading it to others?

a) Practice Social Distancing:

- **Avoid big social gatherings** such as melas, haats, gatherings in religious places, social functions etc.
- **Maintain a safe distance** of at least 1 Metre between you and other people when in public places, especially if they are having symptoms such as cough, fever etc. to avoid direct droplet contact.
- **Stay at home** as much as possible.
- **Avoid physical contact** like handshakes, hand holding or hugs.

b) Practice good hygiene

- **Wash your hands frequently using soap and water**, especially after
  - Coming home from outside or meeting other people especially if they are ill.
  - After having touched your face, coughing or sneezing.
  - Before preparing food, eating or feeding children.
 - Before and after using toilet, cleaning etc.

- While coughing or sneezing cover your nose and mouth with handkerchief or towel or **cough/sneeze into your flexed elbow**.
- **Do not Spit** in public places.
- **Do not speak loudly** or **shout in public places** to prevent spread of droplets.
- **Do not touch your eyes**, **nose** and **mouth** with unclean hands.
- Ensure that the surfaces and objects are regularly cleaned.

c) **Monitor your own health** and immediately contact the ASHA/ANM or visit a Primary Health Centre (PHC).
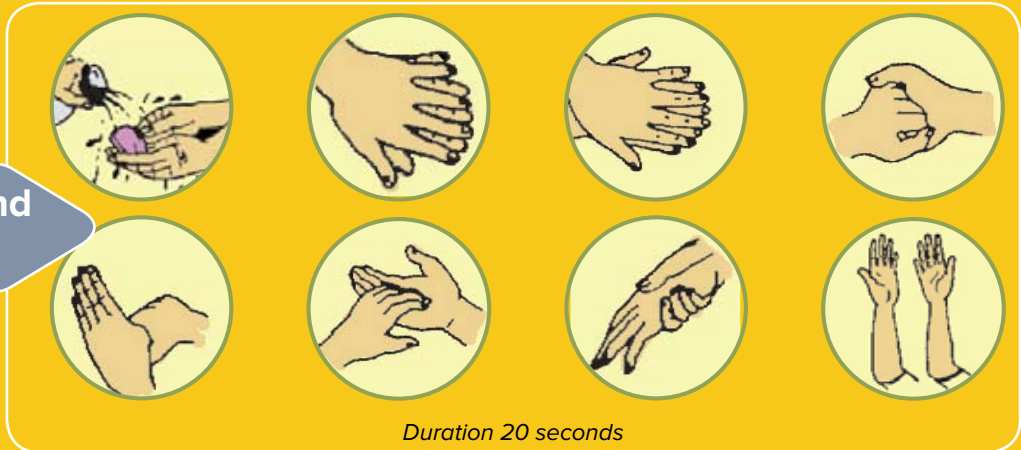
Steps of hand washing

Duration 20 seconds

2. What to do if you are having symptoms or have travelled to other countries or states in past two weeks?

- Inform your health worker or visit the PHC if you are having fever, cough and difficult breathing.
- Do not take medications without the advice of the doctor.
- Take extra care while coughing or sneezing to use handkerchief or towel or cough/sneeze into your flexed elbow.
- Try to maintain a distance of at least 1 Metre from other members of the family who are caring for you.

Frontline workers role in early detection and referral

- As a community worker you may be asked to prepare a line list of all people who have travelled to other countries or other states inside India in last 14 days and inform them that:
  - They should monitor themselves for symptoms of COVID-19 and maintain distance with other family members as much as possible for next two weeks.
  - You will share their names with your Medical Officer at PHC.
  - They can call **State helpline numbers** or **the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare's 24X7 helpline** at **1075** or **011-23978046**

When people with suspected COVID-19 report to the PHC or higher health facility, they may be put in isolation and their family members and close contacts may be put under home quarantine. The purpose of quarantine and isolation is only to control the spread of the disease for the period of incubation (1 to 14 days).

- **Isolation:** people with confirmed COVID-19 disease or those awaiting the results of the test could be kept at the health facility in a separate ward.

- **Home quarantine:** means staying separately at home, in a separate room or space and avoiding contact with other family members or sharing of dishes, towels, bedding or other items and separate cleaning of clothes, dishes, toilet etc. used by the quarantined person.

How to take care of yourself and carry on with your duties as a frontline worker?

- **Take all preventive measures** that you are talking about in the community such as keeping safe distance, washing hands frequently etc.

- If you are **accompanying a suspected case** to any health facility, make sure to cover both your mouth and nose with folded cloth or mask.

- If you are conducting comunity meetings or supporting outreach sessions the **groups should not be larger than 10-12 people**.

- **Self-monitor** for signs of illness and report to the Medical Officers, if any.

- **Try to ensure that you continue to undertake tasks** related to care of pregnant women, new-borns and sick children, Post Natal Care, Breastfeeding and Nutritional Counselling, TB and NCD patient follow up while taking preventive measures.

- Remember older people are at higher risk, so take **special care to visit homes of elderly people.**

- **Continue to pay special attention to the marginalised**, as it is your routine practice.

- As a key member of the healthcare team, you should **support ANM/Medical Officer with information** on people who are at high risk for COVID-19.

- Also as the people's trusted health worker, try to **reassure them** that while those with symptoms and high risk need close attention, for others, prevention measures will decrease the risk of getting the disease.

Ministry of Health & Family Welfare
Government of India