Home Care Handbook
for
Suspected & Confirmed COVID-19 Clients

Date: May 2020
Revision: 00
Document Superseded: None
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In December 2019, China saw an outbreak of the coronavirus leading to a large number of people dying of COVID-19. Subsequent to the outbreak, the coronavirus spread rapidly and uncontrollably across countries resulting in more deaths in large numbers. In view of the rapid spread of the coronavirus across the globe and the exponential growth in death rate due to COVID-19 in various countries, on the 11th March 2020, the World Health Organisation (WHO) declared the coronavirus epidemic a pandemic. Pursuant to the WHO declaration, on the 17th March 2020 the Kingdom of Eswatini declared a National Emergency in an effort to create a conducive environment for effective emergency response in controlling the spread of the coronavirus and preventing deaths caused by the Covid-19. The Government of Eswatini through the Ministry of Health has therefore taken drastic preventive measures to control the spread of the coronavirus by making self-isolation or state-isolation and testing of all COVID-19 suspected cases mandatory. This handbook therefore outlines specific homecare guidelines, practices and techniques that families have to use in order to manage a suspected or confirmed case during self-isolation and for confirmed cases that have tested negative while waiting for the final test. Further to that, this handbook also provides guidelines for handling of the deceased and burials. The whole intention of this handbook is to ensure the safety of all family members and cohabitants during the self-isolation period and in handling of deaths.

Together we can conquer COVID-19.

Dr Simon Zwane,
PRINCIPAL SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF HEALTH
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

The Ministry of Health has developed the “Home Isolation for Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19 Clients - Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)” to assist individuals, families and communities to reduce the risk of contracting COVID-19 during home isolation of COVID-19 suspected or confirmed clients. Clients presenting with mild illness, hospitalization may not be possible because of the burden on the health care system. If there are patients with only mild illness, providing care at home may be considered, as long as they can be followed up and cared for by relatives.

The goal of this document is to provide explicit information on the control, prevention and management of COVID-19 clients in the home environment. These, are precautions that have to be taken at home to reduce illness, deaths and transmission of COVID-19 to uninfected contacts. Isolation at home is important for minimizing the spread of COVID-19 among family members.
Once a client is identified as a suspect or has been confirmed as a COVID-19 case, the following guidance is provided for the patient and carers:

1.1 COVID-19 Suspect/Confirmed Client

a. Stay at your home at all times.
   • To prevent the spread of COVID-19 and to avoid re-infection.

b. Separate yourself from other people in your home.
   • Stay in a separate room, use your own electronics, utensils (dish, drinking glass, cup, plate, bowl, spoon, fork) and bed linen
   • Use a separate bathroom (if possible) from the common family bathroom.
   • Wear a face mask at all times.
   • Take walks around your home (while avoiding contact with other family members) to keep physically fit
   • Limit the number of caregivers to one (1)

c. Take medication as directed by medical team
   • To support your recovery

d. Stay in touch with your medical team
   • To monitor your health
   • To report newly developed symptoms and complications.

e. Ask someone to assist with errands
   • Outdoor essential errands such as shopping, paying bills.

f. Take care of yourself
   • Get enough rest and stay hydrated.
   • Frequently wash your hands with soap and running water at least every 30 minutes
   • Cough and sneeze on a flexed elbow or use tissue and dispose in a disposal bin or plastic bag
   • Use tissue once and discard
   • If you use a handkerchief, use it once and put it in a disinfectant (1:9) overnight
g. **Take care of your room**
   - Damp dust your room with soap and water then disinfect with an alcohol based disinfectant
   - Have a closing disposal bin or plastic bag for contaminated materials such as used toilet tissue
   - Linen
      - Soak your linen in jik/water solution (1:9) overnight
      - Do your laundry and hang in direct sunlight

1.2 **Caregiver**

a. **Protect yourself when caring for a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 client.**
   - Wear gown, apron, face mask and two pairs of gloves at all times when giving help to the client.
   - Avoid touching your mask during use
   - Avoid touching mouth, eyes and nose at all times

b. **Provide support**
   - Have the medical team contact number.
   - Check if the client takes medication as per the doctor’s instruction.
   - Make sure client takes a lot of fluids and gets enough rest.
   - Watch for warnings signs on client such as
      - Difficulty in breathing or shortness of breath
      - Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
      - New confusion or inability to wake up
      - Bluish lips or face
   - Re-assure family members and allay any anxiety.
   - The extent of caring for the client will be determined by the health of the client for example weak clients will need more assistance. Clients are encouraged to do chores for themselves as much as possible to keep the body active.

1.3 **Family members**

a. Observe social distancing of 1 meter or above
b. Avoid hugging
c. Avoid shaking hands
d. Always wash your hands with soap and running water or alcohol (60%) based hand sanitizer
e. Limit contact with client, if possible,
   - Use separate bedroom and bathroom
   - Avoid having visitors
f. Allow client to stay in a separate room

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<td></td>
<td>Do not share electronics, utensils (dish, drinking glass, cup, plate, bowl, spoon, fork) and bed linen, bathroom with client if possible.</td>
<td>Assist in the running of external errands</td>
<td>Keep ongoing communication with client through electronic means such as cell phone</td>
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1.4 Discharging Client from hospital to home setting

Before the patient is discharged, the following should be done:

1.4.1 Prepare family

- Before the patient is discharged the family is prepared for the arrival of the client
- Identify main caregiver: Caregivers should wear a medical mask that covers their mouth and nose when in the same room as the patient. Masks should not be touched or handled during use. If the mask gets wet or dirty from secretions, it must be replaced immediately with a new clean, dry mask
- Choose a room in your home that can be used to separate sick household members from those who are healthy. If it is not possible to have a separate room, implement social distancing by keeping at least 1 meter.
- Identify a separate bathroom for the sick person to use, if possible.
- Clean these rooms, as frequently as possible, and ensure free air circulation.

1.4.2 On discharge

a. Following negative COVID 19 results the client who has been admitted is discharged home.

b. The client will be allowed to resume work as soon as guided by the attending doctor.

c. Every discharged client should continue to adhere to the COVID-19 prevention measures.
2.1 Prevention and Control at Home

2.1.1 Hygiene
- Frequently wash hands with soap and running water or use alcohol (60%) based hand sanitizer.
- Observe social distancing of 1 meter or above
- Use flexed elbow, tissue when coughing and immediately dispose used tissue
- Frequently clean and disinfect surfaces such as tables, door handles, light switches, toilets, sink and electronics.

2.1.2 Laundry
- Wear disposable gloves when handling dirty laundry
- Do not shake dirty laundry
- Used bed linen, towels, sleepwear and other textiles should be stored in a dedicated laundry bag in the client’s room until it is washed.
- In the case of using a washing machine, the clothes should be washed with warm water at 60°- 90°C using laundry detergents and disinfectants
- Washing such clothes should wear hand gloves and wash them with warm water, detergent and disinfectant such as jik.
- Clothes and belongings of the deceased person should be handled with care
- Dry the laundry using direct Sunlight

2.1.3 Use sealed lined bin
- The client should have a waste bag in his or her room for used tissues, face mask and other waste.
- Use gloves when handling waste and wash your hands after.
- Place used disposable face mask, gloves and other dirty items in a lined bin

2.2. Psychosocial Support

2.2.1 Stigma and Discrimination
- Stigma can occur once a person is suspected or has been diagnosed with COVID-19.
- Stigmatized clients can be subjected to social avoidance or rejection, denial of health care, education, housing or employment and physical violence.
2.2.2 How to overcome self-stigma?

- It is normal to feel sad, stressed, confused, scared or angry during a crisis.
- Talking to people you trust can help. Contact your friends and family.
- If you must stay at home, maintain a healthy lifestyle - including proper diet, sleep, exercise and social contacts with loved ones at home and by email and phone with other family and friends.
- Don’t use smoking, alcohol or other drugs to deal with your emotions.
- If you feel overwhelmed, talk to a health worker or counsellor. Have a plan, where to go to and how to seek help for physical and mental health needs if required.
- Get the facts. Gather information that will help you accurately determine your risk so that you can take reasonable precautions. Find a credible source you can trust such as WHO website or, a local or state public health agency.
- Limit worry and agitation by lessening the time you and your family spend watching or listening to media coverage that you perceive as upsetting.
- Draw on skills you have used in the past that have helped you to manage previous life’s adversities and use those skills to help you manage your emotions during the challenging time of this outbreak.

2.2.3 How to overcome family stigma?

- Continue to support family member.
- Avoid labelling or name calling of family member.
- Seek more relevant health information about COVID-19.
These guidelines are based on current knowledge on COVID-19 and existing practices in management of infectious waste generated in a house where a COVID-19 patient is isolated. The Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) guidelines recommend specific measures to be followed by all, including isolation homes, quarantine places, laboratories, and common biomedical waste treatment and disposal facilities, in addition to existing practices.

Following are the recommended waste management guidance:

- Mandatory wearing of gloves
- Mandatory usage of two separate liners which should be sealed or tied
- Mandatory labelling and colour-coded bins for the management of waste generated during the diagnostics and treatment of suspected and confirmed COVID-19 patients
- Generators of waste are responsible with the guidance of the health team for packaging waste for collection to the final destination.
- Transport Drivers should not package waste.
- Each bag must be hand tied by gathering and twisting the neck of the bag and using a tie or hand knot, or rubber band to secure the bag, and each container must be securely closed.
- Closed bags must not be visible once a secondary container (plastic, box or reusable tub) is closed.
- Always properly package waste in appropriate container to limit risk of contamination.
PROTOCOL 3

HANDLING OF DECEASED PERSON WITH COVID-19 AT COMMUNITY LEVEL

This information is designed for use by the family of the deceased person with COVID-19, community leaders, funeral undertakers, health team in collaboration with the Environmental Health Officer to guide the burial process.

Recognizing that COVID-19 is a highly infectious disease, an Environmental Health Officer should be assigned to every funeral of a person who has died of COVID 19 to ensure that the following steps are adhered to as referenced in the Guidelines for the proper Management and Burial of a Dead Body of a Person due to the COVID 19.

3.1 Death of a person due to COVID-19 at home

In the event of a death in the home, the family should inform the health team to provide a shroud and the funeral undertaker

Burial Steps

- Any person preparing or handling the dead body should be someone who is well aware of proper hand washing procedures and ensure that hands are thoroughly washed with soap and running water at all times after handling the body.
- The number of family members in the room where the dead body should be kept at a minimal, (3-5 people), well ventilated with enough lighting
- Those attending funeral should not exceed 20 people and must observe social distance and wear masks.
- Rituals and religious rites relating to the dead body should not be performed.
- Hand hygiene using running water and soap should be done frequently during and after the burial.
- Those attending the funeral should wear masks.
1) Q: What is COVID-19 Coronavirus Disease 2019)?
A. COVID-19 also referred to as Coronavirus disease 2019 is a disease that was first identified in December 2019 hence the reference to 19. It is a respiratory viral illness that can spread from person to person through droplet infection.

2) Q: How can I prevent COVID-19?
A. The best way to prevent COVID-19 infection is to adhere to the Ministry of Health guidelines such as staying at home; hand washing using running water and soap; coughing on flexed elbow; avoid touching eyes; social distancing of at least 1 meter and use of a mask.

3) Q: Should I wear a face covering or face mask when I go out in public?
A. YES.

4) Q: Can disinfectant sprays or wipes be used on my skin to prevent spread of COVID-19?
A. NO.

5) Q: Can you use hand sanitizer if water is not available?
A. YES: If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

6) Q: Are there any vaccines or other medical products to prevent COVID-19?
A. NO (at the moment)

7) Q: Is it safe for me to donate blood during the coronavirus pandemic?
A. YES

8) Q: Are people tested for COVID-19?
A. YES (By health professionals)

9) Can exposure to high temperature prevent infection to COVID-19?
A. No.

10) Can home remedies cure COVID-19
A. No.
School Closure and Children

Discourage children and teens from gathering in other public places with friends while schools are closed to help slow the spread of COVID-19 in the community.

Many schools are offering lessons online (virtual learning). Review assignments from the school, and help your child establish a reasonable pace for completing the work.

If you face technology or connectivity issues, or if your child is having a hard time completing assignments, let the school know.

HOW TO WASH YOURS HANDS

1. USE SOAP
2. PALM TO PALM
3. BACK TO HANDS
4. BETWEEN FINGERS
5. BASE OF THUMBS
6. FINGERNAILS
7. WRISTS
8. RINSE HANDS
9. DRY HANDS
ANNEX 1: HOME CARE ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Assess for the availability of the following</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Structure</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Conducive home setting</td>
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<td>2. Access to running water</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Separate well ventilated room/house for client</td>
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<td>4. Availability of bathroom</td>
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<td>5. Secured home</td>
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<td>6. Availability of toilet</td>
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<td>7. Number of occupants in household</td>
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<td>8. Vulnerable members of the family</td>
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<td>9. Other family members to consider</td>
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<td><strong>Care giver</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Availability</td>
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<td>2. Underlying illness</td>
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<td>3. Above 45 years</td>
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<td>4. Literacy</td>
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<td><strong>Home care package</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Availability of gloves</td>
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<td>2. Availability of mask</td>
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<td>3. Availability of soap</td>
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<td>4. Availability of sanitizer</td>
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<td>5. Availability of utensils</td>
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<td>6. Availability of laundry bin for client</td>
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<td>7. Availability of disinfectants</td>
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**Conducive home setting:** It must be a stand-alone home, avoid flats, crowded houses.

**Running water:** It can either be safe portable water, tap water.

**Literacy:** Able to read and write.

**Vulnerable groups such as:** Family members above 60 years, diabetic, TB and any chronic lung, cardiovascular and kidney diseases

**Other family members to consider:** Children below 5 years, People living with HIV
CLIENT MANAGING COVID-19 AT HOME

1. STAY AT YOUR HOME AT ALL TIMES
   To prevent the spread of COVID-19 and avoid re-infection.

2. SEPARATE YOURSELF FROM OTHER PEOPLE IN YOUR HOME
   - stay in a separate room, use your own electronics, utensils (dish, dinking glass, cup, plate, bowl, spoon, fork) and bed linen, bathroom if possible.
   - Wear a face mask when other people are present.
   - Take walks around your home to keep physically fit
   - Limit the number of caregivers to 1

3. TAKE MEDICATION AS DIRECTED BY YOUR DOCTOR
   To support your recovery

4. STAY IN TOUCH WITH YOUR DOCTOR
   To discuss on how to monitor your health and to report newly developed symptoms and complications.

5. ASK SOMEONE TO ASSIST WITH ERRANDS
   outdoor essential activities (shopping, paying bills).

6. TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF
   - Get enough rest and stay hydrated. Frequently clean with soap and water and disinfect mostly touched surfaces, practice proper personal hygiene. Cough and sneeze on a tissue and dispose properly.
   - Frequently wash your hands with soap and running water, following the proper hand washing procedure.
WHAT’S EXPECTED OF FAMILY MEMBERS WHEN CARING FOR COVID-19 CLIENT AT HOME

1. Observe social distancing of 1 meter or above
2. Avoid shaking hands
3. Always wash your hands with soap and running water or use alcohol (60%) based hand sanitizer
4. Limit contact with patient, if possible,
   • Use separate bedroom and bathroom
   • Visitors should not be allowed
5. Allow patient to stay in a separate room
6. Do not share electronics, utensils (dish, drinking glass, cup, plate, bowl, spoon, fork) and bed linen, bathroom with patient if possible.
7. Assist caregiver and client in the running of external essential errands
CARING FOR A COVID-19 PATIENT AT HOME

• Wear face mask and gloves at all times when giving help to.
• Avoid touching your mask during use
• Avoid touching mouth, eyes and nose at all times
• Frequently clean with soap and water and disinfect mostly touched surfaces

• Get enough rest. Frequently clean with soap and water and disinfect mostly touched surfaces, practice proper personal hygiene. Cough and sneeze on a tissue and dispose properly.
• Frequently wash your hands with soap and running water, following the proper hand washing procedure or use alcohol (60%) based hand sanitizers.

• Have the doctors contact number.
• Help the patient to take medication as per doctor’s instruction.
• Make sure client takes a lot of fluids and gets enough rest.
• Provide assistance in patient’s errands
• Watch for warnings signs on patient such as
  - difficulty in breathing or shortness of breath
  - persistent pain or pressure in the chest
  - new confusion or inability to wake up
  - bluish lips or face
REFERENCES

