

GUIDANCE ON PROMOTING GOOD PRACTICE IN SELF-ISOLATION AT HOME

This guidance may be used by individuals or organizations who interact with the community so that they are prepared to respond effectively to any questions, concerns or beliefs (including rumours) that might cause them to take unnecessary and potentially life threatening risks. It is important in relation to home and self-isolation that the advice we give is actionable: so that people can realistically make changes in their daily lives. As is the case when we address rumours and misinformation, it is important to always aim to give useful, verified and timely information and advice to communities, and to demonstrate that we are listening to them. Everyone is in a different situation, so you may need to adapt the specific advice you give, according to a person's situation and according to the questions or concerns they may express. They may seek clarification. Go through the advice with them and agree on how they can best protect themselves and those around them. The advice you give should acknowledge the confusion or fear that may generate risky behaviours – this is important when giving direction and offering information on steps that communities can take to limit the transmission of the virus and to protect themselves and each other. Simply saying something is wrong is not effective.

The document may be effective as a resource to be used by:

- Humanitarian, NGO, Government Field Teams
- Health Workers and frontline workers
- Community leaders and community networks
- Media outlets, radio and TV broadcasters

How to use this document:

This guidance is intended to assist in the use of key messages document, on self-isolation and how to take action in your daily life to prevent the transmission of the COVID-19 virus. The **self-isolation poster** contains messages that you can pass directly on to community members when you are talking to them about how to avoid the transmission of COVID-19 in their own homes, households and family circles.

1. Words matter. **Avoid summarising** or changing text in a way that will significantly change meaning of the advice.
2. Ensure that you **give clear, actionable advice** about good habits and next steps; ensure people know where they can go for mental health, medical assistance or more information.
3. **Listen to community**; if they raise a concern, you can search the existing materials and KEY MESSAGES document for a relevant response. If it is something new, or something is still not clear to them or you, note it down and pass it on to the RCCE Working Group.
4. **Ensure that the date is highlighted** and **check that information is not outdated**. Note that advice may change as we come to understand more about the virus, or as government policy, regulations or other factors change the way we respond. The *Key Prevention / Protection Messages* at the end of the document will not change.
5. As literacy is low in many parts of Afghanistan, you may read or adapt key information to suit different distribution platforms such as audio-visual mediums etc. Ensure that you **include and repeat the key actionable information** such as where to get help locally.
6. All of us working with advising communities should keep in mind the **do no harm** principle.

Background:

Self-isolation is a public health technique employed to tackle the spread of disease. **It is the best way for people who may have been exposed to COVID-19 but do not yet have symptoms to protect their community from further spread.** The transmission of COVID-19 can be greatly reduced by keeping people who are confirmed to have contracted, or those who have been exposed to and may have contracted COVID-19, separated from the rest of the population.

However, the ability to use this technique in overcrowded settings is particularly challenging as space in homes and shelters is limited and typically shared by many people. Overcrowding is defined as a situation in which a person is living in a space that is less than 4.5m² per person. Overcrowded settings can be in urban and semi-urban areas and host a diverse population, including IDPs, returnees, refugees and host communities. The overall shelter situation and absence of centralised access to services for these and other vulnerable groups leaves large populations (including IDPs, returnees, and host communities) at heightened risk of widespread transmission of COVID-19.

Applying the medical advice and infection prevention measures to your own situation can be challenging. The following provide some common scenarios, and what you should do. **All the measures described below apply even if you already had COVID in the past and recovered from it.**

WHAT IS SELF-ISOLATION?

- **SELF-ISOLATION IS** when you stay at home and do not interact with other people, because you have or might have coronavirus (COVID-19). This helps stop the virus spreading to other people.
- if possible; it means organizing other people to do your normal routines such as going to the market and dropping off things at your door.
- **SELF-ISOLATION IS NOT** the same as **social distancing**, which is general advice for everyone to avoid close contact with other people by maintaining a 2m distance from other people both inside and outside the home or other buildings, whether they belong to the same family or not.

Self-isolating isn't clearly understood by the general public yet, so we need to be clear about what it means, whom it applies to, and when it needs to be done. We also need to be prepared to repeat the advice until it is well understood. Some quick guidance and reminders of key points follow. The **self-isolation poster** can be shown to people while you discuss the reasons it is an important action to take to protect ourselves and each other.

WHO NEEDS TO SELF-ISOLATE?

1. You have coronavirus symptoms
 - *fever/high temperature*
 - *new, continuous cough*
 - *cramps, soreness, body ache*
 - *headaches*
 - *diarrhoea*
 - *loss or change to your sense of smell or taste list symptoms)*
2. You have tested positive for the coronavirus
3. You think you may have the coronavirus
4. Someone in your household, family or close contacts has symptoms or has tested positive, or has come in close contact with someone else who has tested positive or shows symptoms
5. You are in an at-risk group for severe illness from coronavirus
 - *older people (over 60 years old)*
 - *people with underlying medical conditions (cancer, cardiovascular disease, serious heart conditions, chronic respiratory disease, asthma, obesity, diabetes, hypertension or high blood pressure, pregnancy, smoking)*
6. You recently returned from travel, work, mosque, outside the home in public settings and you or people who were in your vicinity failed to take proper infection prevention controls (PPE, social distancing, etc.)
7. You recently returned from travel outside of Afghanistan

HOW TO SELF-ISOLATE:

REMEMBER: all the measures described below apply even if you already had COVID in the past and recovered from it.

- ✓ Self-isolate by staying home for 14 days after you last showed symptoms
- ✓ Cover your mouth and nose with a surgical mask or makeshift mask or folded scarf or cloth
- ✓ Maintain 2m social distance from other household members at all times
- ✓ Strictly follow hygiene measures
- ✓ Clean surfaces regularly and continuously throughout the day
- ✓ Wash your hands with soap and water regularly and continuously throughout the day
- ✓ Ask other people to do your normal routines, such as cleaning, cooking, going to the market and dropping off things at your door
- ✗ Do not shake hands
- ✗ Do not greet others with customary kisses and hugs
- ✓ Greet others by placing your right hand over your heart

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES	ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS
You are caring for someone who is sick in your household	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Self-isolate, following the above guidance ✓ Maintain the 2m social distance from other household members at all times
You need to self-isolate AND You live in a large household and CAN self-isolate alone in a separate room	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Self-isolate in a separate room, following the above guidance ✓ Do not partake in any family activities, such as meals and praying ✓ Pray separately ✓ Cook separately ✓ Do the household chores, such as laundry, separately
You need to self-isolate AND You <u>CANNOT</u> self-isolate in a separate room or space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Self-isolate, following the above guidance ✓ Maintain the 2m social distance from other household members at all times ✓ Do not partake in any family activities, such as meals and praying ✓ Pray separately ✓ Cook separately ✓ Do the household chores, such as laundry, separately
You need to self-isolate AND You have a large family to care for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Self-isolate, following the above guidance ✓ Limit physical contact with your children and other family members ✓ Clean surfaces regularly and continuously throughout the day ✓ Wash your hands and your children's hands after every single physical contact with them
You need to self-isolate AND You live in one room with many people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Self-isolate, following the above guidance ✓ Limit physical contact with your children and other family members

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Clean surfaces regularly and continuously throughout the day ✓ You and your family should wash your hands continuously throughout the day ✓ Build soft walls with blankets to make a space to self-isolate alone from the rest of the household
<p>You need to self-isolate AND You live in a very small or tight living space AND You don't have a mask</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Self-isolate, following the above guidance ✓ Cover your mouth and nose with a makeshift mask made from a folded scarf or a cloth ✓ Everyone should wear face coverings at home
<p>You need to meet your essential needs, like working or shopping for food outside the house</p>	<p>Take extra precautionary measures, when outside the house, by doing the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Cover your mouth and nose with a surgical mask or makeshift mask or folded scarf or cloth ✓ Maintain 2m social distance when interacting with others outside your household, so do not infect others ✓ Seek out extra guidance more specific to different scenarios when you leave the house (work, education) ✓ Understand that if you leave the house without wearing a mask or practicing social distancing, you potentially endanger the health of yourself, the rest of your family, and your community

KEY MESSAGES FOR PROTECTION AND GENERAL PREVENTION:

Key Protection Message - If you are concerned about someone's safety or a person expresses concern about their safety at home, you can convey the following key message - this way, people have pathways to report urgent issues, and the possibility to leave home only if necessary during their self-isolation is conveyed:

"Please stay at home and avoid all non-essential movements. If you feel unsafe at home or if your life is in danger, leave your home wearing a mask to a location where you feel safe such as a community-based centre or facility and observe social distancing. It can be the home of someone you trust, or a community-based centre or facility. If your physical condition worsens, you can call 166 (phone number for MoPH). if you feel unsafe or have urgent protection issues, call 410 and report it to Awaaz on that line".

Key Prevention Message - It is critical that the following message about prevention be shared if it is clearly not already understood, and best delivered in its entirety as follows:

"To protect yourself, make sure you clean your hands frequently and thoroughly and avoid touching your eyes, mouth, and nose. Hand-washing with soap, wearing a mask and keeping a physical distance of 2 meters are the number one steps recommended by health professionals to protect individuals and help prevent spreading the virus to others. If you think you may have COVID-19, you should wear a mask when other people are around. You should also wear a mask if you are caring for someone with COVID-19. People with severe symptoms may be treated in hospital with equipment that helps them breath, however most people are able to recover from the symptoms without this level of treatment. If you feel sick with mild symptoms, stay at home in isolation and strictly avoid sharing space with other members of the family for at least 14 days. The same is true if one of your family members are affected because you may also have the virus. Call the national MoPH hotline on 166 or your provincial MoPH hotline if you need more information. It is important that you continue to use medical services for regular health check-ups and treatments, including for vaccinations, ante-natal care, diabetes or high blood pressure and to ensure the safe delivery of babies."