

PREVENTIVE STRATEGY FOR COVID-19 IN WORKPLACE

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BACKGROUND

Preventive strategy is the current strategy to limit the spread of cases. Early screening, diagnosis, isolation, and treatment are necessary to prevent further spread. Preventive strategies are focused on the isolation of patients and careful infection control, including appropriate strategy to be adopted during the diagnosis and the provision of clinical care to an infected patient.

The following guidelines outline the preventive and response strategy to be observed to contain the spread of COVID-19 in workplace settings.

Basic preventive strategy

The basic preventive strategy includes simple public health strategy that is to be followed to reduce the risk of infection with COVID-19. These strategy need to be observed by all (employees and visitors) at all times. These include:

- Physical distancing of at least one meter to be followed at all times.
- Use of face covers/masks to be mandatory.
- Practice frequent hand washing (for at least 40-60 seconds) even when hands are not visibly dirty and use of alcohol based hand sanitizers (for at least 20 seconds).
- Respiratory etiquettes to be strictly followed. This involves strict practice of covering one's mouth and nose while coughing/sneezing with a tissue/handkerchief/flexed elbow and disposing off used tissues properly.
- Self-monitoring of health by all and reporting any illness at the earliest

Do's

- ✓ To maintain personal hygiene and physical distancing.
- ✓ To practice frequent hand washing. Wash hands with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand rub.
- ✓ To cover your nose and mouth with hand kerchief/tissue while sneezing and coughing. To throw used tissues into closed bins immediately after use.
- ✓ To maintain a safe distance from persons during interaction, especially with those having flu-like symptoms.
- ✓ To sneeze in the inner side of your elbow and not to cough into the palms of your hands.
- ✓ To take their temperature regularly and check for respiratory symptoms.
- ✓ To see a doctor if you feel unwell (fever, difficulty in breathing and coughing). While visiting doctor, wear a mask/cloth to cover your mouth and nose.

Don'ts

- ✓ Shake hands.
- ✓ Have a close contact with anyone, if you're experiencing cough and fever.
- ✓ Touch your eyes, nose and mouth.
- ✓ Sneeze or cough into palms of your hands.
- ✓ Spit in Public.
- ✓ Travel unnecessarily, particularly to any affected region.
- ✓ Participate in large gatherings, including sitting in groups at canteens.
- ✓ Visit gyms, clubs and crowded places etc.
- ✓ Spread rumours or panic.

Risk profiling of contacts

Contacts are persons who have been exposed to a confirmed case anytime between 2 days prior to onset of symptoms (in the positive case) and the date of isolation (or maximum 14 days after the symptom onset in the case).

High-risk contact

- Touched body fluids of the patient (respiratory tract secretions, blood, vomit, saliva, urine, faeces e.g. being coughed on, touching used paper tissues with a bare hand)
- Had direct physical contact with the body of the patient including physical examination without PPE
- Touched or cleaned the linens, clothes, or dishes of the patient.
- Lives in the same household as the patient.
- Anyone in close proximity (within 1 meter) of the confirmed case without precautions.
- Passengers in close proximity (within 1 meter) in a conveyance with a symptomatic person who later tested positive for COVID-19 for more than 6 hours.

Low-risk contact

- Shared the same space (worked in same room/similar) but not having a high-risk exposure to confirmed case of COVID-19.
- Travelled in same environment (bus/train/flight/any mode of transit) but not having a high-risk exposure.

Conclusion

In COVID-19, which has no approved treatment, it is very important to prevent the spread in the society and workplace. The main points in preventing the spread in society are hand hygiene, social distancing and quarantine. With increased testing capacity, detecting more positive patients in the community will also enable the reduction of secondary cases with stricter quarantine rules

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