

# Guidelines for home isolation related to MERS Corona Virus infections

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- Isolation is defined as the separation or restriction of activities of an ill person with a contagious disease from those who are well.
- Before the ill person is isolated at home a healthcare professional should:
  - Assess whether the home is suitable and appropriate for isolating the ill person. You can conduct this assessment by phone or direct observation.
    - The home should have a functioning bathroom. If there are multiple bathrooms, one should be designated solely for the ill person.
    - The ill person should have his or her own bed and preferably a private room for sleeping.
    - Basic amenities, such as heat, electricity, potable and hot water, sewer, and telephone access, should be available.
    - There should be a primary caregiver who can follow the healthcare provider's instructions for medications and care. The caregiver should help the ill person with basic needs in the home and help with obtaining groceries, prescriptions, and other personal needs.
- If the home is suitable and appropriate for home care and isolation you should give the patient, the caregiver, and household members the following instructions:

## For the patient

### **Separate yourself from other people in your home**

As much as possible, you should stay in a different room from other people in your home. Also, you should use a separate bathroom, if available.

### **Call ahead before visiting your doctor**

Before your medical appointment, call the healthcare provider and tell him or her that you may have MERS-CoV infection. This will help the healthcare provider's office take steps to keep other people from getting infected.

### **Wear a medical mask**

You should wear a medical mask when you are in the same room with other people and when you visit a healthcare provider. If you cannot wear a medical mask, the people who live with you should wear one while they are in the same room with you.

### **Cover your coughs and sneezes**

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, or you can cough or sneeze into your sleeve. Throw used tissues in a lined trash can, and immediately wash your hands with soap and water or disinfect it with waterless alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

### **Wash your hands**

Wash your hands often and thoroughly with antiseptic soap and water. You can use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if antiseptic soap and water are not available and if your hands are not visibly dirty. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

### **Avoid sharing household items**

You should not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, bedding, or other items with other people in your home. After using these items, you should wash them thoroughly with soap and warm water.

### **For caregivers and household members**

If you live with or care for someone at home who is ill and being evaluated for MERS-CoV infection, you should:

- Make sure that you understand and can help the ill person follow the healthcare provider's instructions for medication and care. You should help the ill person with basic needs in the home and provide support for getting groceries, prescriptions, and other personal needs.
- Have only people in the home who are essential for providing care for the ill person.
  - Other household members should stay in another home or place of residence. If this is not possible, they should stay in another room, or be separated from the ill person as much as possible. Use a separate bathroom, if available.
  - Restrict visitors who do not have an essential need to be in the home.
  - Keep elderly people and those who have compromised immune systems or specific health conditions away from the ill person. This includes people with chronic heart, lung or kidney diseases, and diabetes.
- Make sure that shared spaces in the home have good air flow, such as by air-conditioner or an opened window.
- Wear a disposable medical mask, gown, and gloves when you touch or have contact with the ill person's blood, body fluids and/or secretions, such as sweat, saliva, sputum, nasal mucous, vomit, urine, or diarrhea.
  - Throw out disposable medical masks, gowns, and gloves after using them. Do not reuse.
  - Wash your hands immediately after removing your medical mask, gown, and gloves.
- Wash your hands often and thoroughly with soap and water. You can use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available and if your hands are not visibly dirty. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

- Avoid sharing household items. You should not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, bedding, or other items with an ill person who is being evaluated for MERS-CoV infection. After the ill person uses these items, you should wash them thoroughly with soap and warm water.
- Clean all “high-touch” surfaces every day. Also, clean any surfaces that may have blood, body fluids and/or secretions on them.
  - Wear disposable gloves and gown while cleaning surfaces.
  - Clean frequently touched surfaces such as bedside tables, bed frame, and other bedroom furniture daily with regular household cleaners or a diluted bleach solution (1 part bleach to 99 parts water). Clean bathroom and toilet surfaces daily with regular household cleaners or a diluted bleach solution (1 part bleach to 9 parts water).
- Wash laundry thoroughly.
  - Immediately remove and wash clothes or bedding that have blood, body fluids and/or secretions on them.
  - Wear disposable gloves while handling soiled items. Wash your hands immediately after removing your gloves.
  - Wash the items with detergent and warm water at the maximum available cycle length then machine dry them.
- Place all used gloves, gowns, medical masks, and other contaminated items in a lined container before disposing them with other household waste. Wash your hands immediately after handling these items.
- Follow the guidance for close contacts below.

### For close contacts including healthcare workers

If you have had close contact with someone who is ill and being evaluated for MERS-CoV infection, you should:

- Monitor your health for 14 days, starting from the day you were last exposed to the ill person. Watch for these symptoms:
  - Fever (38° C, or higher). Take your temperature twice a day.
  - Coughing.
  - Shortness of breath.
  - Other early symptoms to watch for are chills, body aches, sore throat, headache, diarrhea, nausea/vomiting, and runny nose.

- If you develop symptoms, follow the prevention steps described above, and call your healthcare provider as soon as possible. Before your medical appointment, call the healthcare provider and tell him or her about your possible exposure to MERS-CoV. This will help the healthcare provider's office take steps to keep other people from getting infected. Ask your healthcare provider to call the MOH.
- If you do not have any of the symptoms, you can continue with your daily activities, such as going to work, school, or other public areas.