

Guidelines for Household in a urban setup for various activities in era of COVID 19 Pandemic with or without Lockdown

As per various national and international guidelines and common understanding about preventive measures for COVID 19

By Dr Tapasvi Puwar and Dr Deepak Saxena

Indian Institute of Public Health Gandhinagar

General guidelines

1. Hand wash:

One of the most crucial aspect. We need to remember and inculcate the practice of hand washing not only to fight COVID 19 but also other existing and emerging and re-emerging new infections in the future. Washing hands with soap and water for 20 seconds vital and important. Hand wash should be done before and after all activities. Ensure y washing hands after coming from outside, before touching your face, after coughing or sneezing. This will prevent all respiratory and digestive system infections.

Take bath and change the clothes immediately after coming home from work or any long hour outdoor visit. Soak the used clothes in soap and water

Inculcate the habit of carrying sanitizer once you go out and hand washing is not possible. . Whenever it is not possible to wash hands with soap and water, wash it with the sanitizer at least.

2. Respiratory hygiene:

Another important aspect to prevent all respiratory infections including COVID 19. Covering mouth and nose while coughing and sneezing is very important to prevent all respiratory infections. Another point along with this is to wash your hands after handling your respiratory secretions. If you cover your nose and mouth while coughing or sneezing with tissue paper then dispose the same in the dustbin and do not throw it indiscriminately. If you use handkerchief, do not allow anyone else to handle it. Wash it whenever possible with soap and water and sun dry it.

Always remember to wash your hands with soap and water after every such activity.

3. Social distancing:

Post lockdown social distancing is also important to follow to prevent transmission of the COVID 19. It means maintaining minimum of 1 meter or 3 feet distance from everyone every time outside your home.

The principle is wherever possible, follow social distancing irrespective of lifting of sanctions by government. This will prevent getting infection and spreading infection to your family.

- a. Inculcate habit of saying Namaste and avoid shaking hands
- b. If possible , avoid attending or arranging gatherings (Parties or any religious gatherings)
- c. If you come to know any person in your company or office is suffering from any respiratory infection, if you are employer, give him/her leave. If you are not in a position to give leave, maintain social distancing from the person
- d. While traveling also, try to maintain social distancing. In public transport try to avoid full train or buses. Adopt walking or cycles for short distances
- e. If you go to Salon / barber's shop see that everyone has mask, request the dresser to clean all equipment with disinfectant before use. Ensure salon worker/ Barber is wearing

a mask and uses a new washed cloth for you. Avoid touching various surfaces in the shop and avoid talking in the shop.

- f. Maintain social distancing while shopping anything at any shop. Try to do digital payment and avoid exchange of cash or cards
- g. Even while purchasing vegetables or fruits from any vendor ensure social distancing and wash hands after any such purchase.

4. Mask:

Mask provides additional protection. Whenever you go outside of your home wear the mask. If you suffer from cough or cold always wear a mask to prevent spread of your infections to others. Many South East Asian countries have cultural norm of wearing a mask whenever they go out. If possible, do practice it. People in certain occupations are more to come in contact with people like barbers or a front desk person at any office, Courier boys etc. they should always wear a mask. If you are not working in the hospital of COVID 19 patients, simple homemade mask should suffice. Also learn handling, wearing and removing techniques of mask. Simple mask should be washed with soap and water after every use and ensure to sundry it before next use. If you are using disposable masks, make sure to dispose it after use in a dustbin with a lid

5. Isolation:

If you ever suffer from any type of cold or cough with sore throat and fever, try to isolate yourself in home and take proper rest. Do not go to office, school, any gathering or at any public place. This practice by all of us will prevent spread of any kind of respiratory infections to others.

6. Maintain good health and immunity

Keep your immunity good at all times. Take regular healthy diets. Avoid frequent eating of junk food. Always make habit of taking one fruit daily, some dry fruits daily to maintain good health. Wash all vegetables and fruits before use in simple water. Take fresh home cook food if possible.

You can also take various Ayurvedic, Homeopathic immune booster as per expert advice.

7. Exercise and Yoga

Exercise regularly for 20 minutes. It also improve your immunity and keeps you healthy. Practice Yoga, Pranayam daily including breathing exercises. It will help to maintain your mental health even in difficult times.

8. Sleep

Take sound and adequate sleep for at least 6 to 7 hours a day. It will not only refresh you but also helps you to maintain good immunity

9. Seek Medical care

If you feel ill or develop any symptoms immediately seek medical help. Government has designated centres, hospitals for COVID 19. Visit these centres or call 104 if you have any such symptoms.

10. Take care of elderly or person with any health problem at your home

Take due care of persons of 60 or more years of age, and persons with any health problems at your home. They are vulnerable to catch infection from you and develop serious disease. Help them maintaining their health and see that they take their required medicines regularly. Whenever you go from outside do not touch them before washing your hands or taking bath. Also take such care of pregnant woman or children in your family.

Don'ts

1. Do not spit in the public places. This is must and we need to practice always.
2. Do not touch surfaces in the public places whenever you go outside. Immediately after touching such surfaces always wash your hands
3. Do not shake hands.
4. Do not touch your eye, face or mouth without washing hands
5. Do not arrange or attend unnecessary social or religious gatherings
6. Do not take much of stress in the life. Stress will affect your physical health also along with mental health. Do not panic about the situation.
7. Do not visit places with so many people and where social distancing is not possible
8. Do not travel unnecessarily by any mode.
9. Do not take outside food or junk foods. It will hamper your immunity which is very important to fight various diseases including COVID 19
10. Do not keep or spread social stigma regarding COVID 19 disease or patient. Respect Corona warriors.
11. Do not listen or read or forward any fake news in any kind of media. Avoid excessive use of any form of media.

ADVISABLE PROTOCOLS REGARDING PART-TIMER DOMESTIC HELP VISITING FOR FEW HOURS TO ASSIST.

Although there are no set protocols regarding do's and don'ts about a part-timer domestic help visiting for few hours to assist, but the following which I am forwarding now seems to be more logical and evidence based, and might be a useful:

If there is no option apart from getting your domestic help then the following are the protocols to be strictly followed..

- Ideally, domestic help should come to only one house for work. However, may not be practically feasible
- If possible minimum entry of domestic help should be there in your house say for cleaning utensils, or clothes
- He/she must follow general hygiene of hand wash, wearing mask, not touch mask or face, and respiratory hygiene as mentioned above, He/she should talk minimally with any member of the household. Discourage him/her from touching various surfaces of the house unnecessarily.
- Keep a Cloth Mask and plastic Hand Gloves (not his/her own) outside your door which domestic help must wear before entering your flat. While leaving he/she must leave these upon exiting from your house and must be washed with Soap Water and sundry so as to be reused by him/her on next visit. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD HE/SHE BE WEARING WHAT SHE HAS CARRIED WITH HER ...INSIDE YOUR House.
- Never touch front side of mask
- He/she should follow prescribed method of wearing a mask

- Each of the family members must also wear a Cloth Mask when the part timer domestic help is around. None of these Masks should be reused the next day without washing.
- Each of the family members must maintain safe distance from the part-timer domestic help as long as HE/she is in the house.
- Family Members with existing health problems, those old age, pregnant women, and children must at no time be in the same room where the domestic help is working (e.g., if we have an elderly family member, say MOM/ Father, then the domestic help must not come in the same room when the elderly family members and children are present therein)
- Request the part-timer domestic help to avoid bringing any of her stuffs like Keys / Mobiles / Polyethene / Jute bag in your home / or request her to keep outside your house.....while he/she is in the house.
- Don't ask him/her to purchase stuff on your behalf and bring the same to your house. If urgent you may need to undertake standard precautions of disinfecting all the stuff brought by the part-timer domestic help in your Flat.
- If the part-time domestic help is accompanied by any of his/her friends / relatives for assistance, better avoid the same. However, if at all so urgent all the above described precautions must also be followed for the accompanying person.
- Keep full address of the household help and if possible keep a watch on geography of his/her residence in terms of any outbreakA quick chat with her on daily basis as well Arogya Setu App and Newspaper reports might help.
- Avoid the practice of dropping and picking him/her in your own car. If unavoidable, keep the Car AC Off and ensure that all windows of your car are fully open while you drive and standard practices such as wearing Mask, Social distancing (request him/her to be on back seat and you be should be Driving).
- 13) Avoid any currency transaction on daily basis (No harm in giving him/her a bit in advance). It is preferable to make E-transfer to her account or PayTM, if feasible.
- Inform the society (MC) about the household help and implied responsibility of the house owner is expected if the worst does come true.

Vegetable and fruits: Purchase and handling

- While purchasing vegetable or fruits always maintain social distance of minimum 3 feet from vendor as well as other customers
- Always wear a mask
- Take vegetables or fruits in your cloth bag
- If possible do digital payment
- If not then keep change and try to pay as much the cost and you do not have to take return money from the vendor
- Still if you are taking money back try to put them in a box or a plastic bag and touch them after 3 days
- Immediately coming back at home, wash your hands with soap and water. You may put in soda bicarb water. But never wash vegetables or fruits with soap and water
- Wash them again before use
- Remember after cooking there are no chances of infection

Milk and milk products

- While purchasing milk and milk products always maintain social distance of minimum 3 feet from vendor as well as other customers
- Always wear a mask
- Take packets of milk and milk products in your cloth bag
- If possible do digital payment
- If not then keep change and try to pay as much the cost and you do not have to take return money from the vendor
- Still if you are taking money back try to put them in a box or a plastic bag and touch them after 3 days
- After coming home first wash your hands with soap and water
- Wash all the products in the plastic bags with soap and water as it is plastic surface and cold also
- After washing you may use them or put them in your refrigerator
- Wash your hands after handling it with soap and water

Groceries

- While purchasing groceries always maintain social distance of minimum 3 feet from vendor as well as other customers
- Always wear a mask
- Take packets of groceries in your cloth bag
- If possible do digital payment
- If not then keep change and try to pay as much the cost and you do not have to take return money from the vendor
- Still if you are taking money back try to put them in a box or a plastic bag and touch them after 3 days
- After coming home first wash your hands with soap and water
- If you do not want to use any product immediately, put all of them in a big open container and leave them for three days. After that you may use them
- Wash all the products in the plastic bags with soap and water as it is plastic surface and if you want to use them immediately
- After wash you may store them in your household container
- Wash your hands after handling it with soap and water

Barber

- If you go to salon, it should be through prior appointment only
- Salon owner should not call more than the capacity and if place available then 1 or 2 in waiting
- If possible keep AC of the shop at 25 degree C or above
- Wearing mask is must for barber and all customers
- If you are going for shave or any beauty treatment on the face, applying persons should wear face shield over the mask. This is mandated in European countries
- Make sure all equipment are disinfected before use at your turn
- Make sure they use disinfected cloth for you
- Do not talk unnecessarily
- Do not touch any surface in the salon unnecessarily

- Frequently wash your hands with sanitizer if not possible with soap and water
- If feasible call barber or beautician at your home
- All the persons must wear a mask, and frequent hand wash is must
- Even at your home do not talk unnecessarily with beautician or barber
- Provide them a mask from your home if they are coming to your place
- They should not touch anywhere in your house
- You or barber or beautician, no one should suffer from common cold cough or fever
- Always follow respiratory hygiene

Transport

- Follow strictly government guidelines for travel in personal or private vehicle
- Only one on two wheeler
- Maximum three with driver in a car
- Avoid all unnecessary travel
- Sanitize your hand before and after travel
- Wear mask
- Do not touch surfaces of any vehicle if not required
- Use public transport with all abovementioned care
- If possible travel by cycle or walking while traveling for short distance

Newspaper

- If possible put newspaper in sunlight for 2-3 hours and then read as it will kill all viruses on it

Courier, postman, Delivery boys

- Follow the principle of no or minimal contact
- If possible do not accept items from a delivery boy without a mask
- Whenever possible ask them to keep item outside your home. Collect the item when the delivery boy leaves your premise
- Do digital payment
- Keep social distancing of minimum 3 to 6 feet while dealing with them
- If not then keep change and try to pay as much the cost and you do not have to take return money from the vendor
- Still if you are taking money back try to put them in a box or a plastic bag and touch them after 3 days
- Possible use items of courier post or any item delivered to you by keeping in open for 3 days
- Wash your hands after handling it with soap and water
- If any food item is being delivered, put the item out of the box or any outside container, and keep in utensil of your house
- Immediately wash hands with soap and water

Ironing

- Follow the principal of no or minimal contact
- Ensure laundry man to always wear a mask.
- Do digital payment
- Keep social distancing of minimum 3 to 6 feet while dealing with them

- If not then keep change and try to pay as much the cost and you do not have to take return money from the vendor
- Still if you are taking money back try to put them in a box or a plastic bag and touch them after 3 days
- Wash your hands with soap and water after taking clothes
- If clothes are wrapped with a piece of cloth, take the clothes out of wrapped cloth and give him new clothes to wrap in cloth piece.
- If covering cloth piece is left at your home immediately wash it with soap and water

Waste management

- You and collector of waste must wear mask
- Throw the waste from a bucket in a collecting vehicle
- If a cleaner comes to collect waste from your house keep distance, throw waste in his collection bin