

## Mini Review

# Attention Health Care Professionals! Follow Simple Tips to Reduce the Transmission of the COVID-19

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## Abstract

The infection control is the primary measure to prevent person-to-person transmission of this COVID-19 virus and to halt the propagation of this pandemic. Because there is scarcity of any effective therapeutic drugs against the COVID-19 in the absence of protective immunity in the general population against this novel corona virus. The Health Care Personnel should act responsibly at personal level to mitigate the chain of transmission of this COVID-19. Besides the usual hand hygiene practices, the careful approach of every Health Care Personnel (HCP) should be to clean and disinfect their personal fomites while in duty area and after taking off from the duty hours. We are writing this article with the aim to disseminate a bunch of simple tips amongst the health care professionals ranging from doctors, nursing staff, laboratory staff and even the general ancillary staff of the hospitals. Most of us may be aware of these precautions but what will make the difference is remembering and practicing them during your duty hours. Adhering to hand hygiene practices and to other small infection control tips by HCP may decrease the chances of HCP getting infected themselves and transmitting this virus to the general patients and general population. All HCP should join hand to douse the flames of this COVID-19 world war.

**Keywords:** Health care personnel; COVID-19; Hand hygiene; Pandemic; Infection control

## Introduction

Almost all cases of COVID-19 globally have evidence of human to human transmission [1]. The infection control is the primary measure to prevent person-to-person transmission of this COVID-19 virus and to halt the propagation of this pandemic. Because there is scarcity of any effective therapeutic drugs against the COVID-19 in the absence of protective immunity in the general population against this novel corona virus. Also because of non-availability of the required vaccine against COVID-19 virus and its physical stability in the environment, the primary infection control measures become must. Early recognition and prompt isolation of suspected cases are the principal measures against nosocomial transmission of any such infectious disease. Respiratory droplet and contact precautions are most effective under all circumstances [2,3].

Apart from the general infection control measures by the public health administration and hospital authorities, the HCP should also act responsibly at personal level to mitigate the chain of transmission of this COVID-19. Besides the usual hand hygiene practices, the careful approach of every Health Care Personnel (HCP) should be to clean and disinfect their personal fomites while in duty area and after taking off from the duty hours. In this situation of pandemic,

the health care workers should act maturely and take adequate precautions to avoid themselves being infected. This in turn will prevent the crunch of healthcare facilities by conserving the healthy HCP. We are writing this article with the aim to disseminate a bunch of simple tips amongst the health care professionals ranging from doctors, nursing staff, laboratory staff and even the general ancillary staff of the hospitals. And we aspire that this article may be equally useful to our paramedical colleagues. Most of us may be aware of these precautions but what will make the difference is remembering and practicing them during your duty hours.

## COVID Control Tips

Following these small tips will decrease the probability of you as an HCP being infected by COVID-19 and in turn decreasing the chances of transmitting this virus to the general patients you may be taking care of, your colleagues at hospital and your friends and family members at home. These simple tips include:

1. Avoid hugging and shaking hands while greeting your colleagues and friends upon arrival in the hospital and try to maintain a social distance of at least one meter during the duty hours too.
2. Regularly wash your hands with soap and in-between use alcohol-based sanitizer solution to clean your hands after touching the patients or the fomites in the patient care area. Always sanitize your hands before you move forward to check another patient; whether in OPD or IPD [4].
3. While sanitizing your hands, also clean your personal writing pen in between, by rubbing it with the sanitizer solution. Don't take away any pens, pencils, markers or any other stationary items from the hospital premises. Keep a separate bunch of such things on your table at your patient care delivery area in the hospital. Especially, keep a separate stock of these items in the wards where COVID-19 patient or suspects are being

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treated and frequently discard these items after thorough disinfectioning.

4. If possible don't use mobile phones in the areas where COVID-19 patients or suspects are being treated. Instead use intercom phones or public address systems to communicate with your colleagues to get or pass on orders and directions.
5. If you can't completely abandon the use of mobile phones; at least use them less frequently and avoid social media while you are on duty. Take care to sanitize regularly your mobile phones also, by applying sanitizer solution to its surface. Preferably use Blue-tooth device while answering a phone call, especially while you are wearing a PPE.
6. Follow the standard procedures for donning and doffing of PPE before the donning of PPE, preferably empty your bowels and bladder [4].
7. Avoid repeated and unnecessary scratching of your body. By this your protective gear may become loose and less effective.
8. Avoid touching your eyes, mouth, nose, face and face mask with your hands In between if you need to correct the position of the facemask; do it by adjusting the straps directly while not touching the front of the mask [5].
9. Follow the practice of warm saline or chlorhexidine gargles before you join the duty and after leaving the hospital. This may prevent the colonization of pathogen in your pharynx.
10. All health care personnel caring for suspected or confirmed COVID-19 patients must have daily late afternoon temperature checks and should go into isolation or quarantine after any symptoms of COVID-19 or any unprotected exposure respectively, to achieve early detection and to avoid nosocomial furtherance of this pandemic [6].
11. Observe the respiratory hygiene practices and follow the social and medical etiquettes while sneezing or coughing [3,5]. Try to use good quality tissue paper instead of handkerchiefs [7]. However, if used, then throw out your handkerchiefs at the time you leave the hospital after completion of your duty hours. Use a new or separate handkerchief or tissue paper at home (hostel).
12. Avoid taking pen-drives, jewellery, key-chains, wallets, bank-cards and other visiting cards with you while you are in the patient care area. Alternately keep small cash money with you; that may be needed in case of some urgent need. If somehow you have kept any such thing in your pocket while on duty, then in between, disinfect the same by application of some sanitizer solution.
13. Avoid taking laptops, bags and books along with you to the patient care areas.
14. Wash your face, arms and feet with soap when you go off-duty from the hospital.
15. Keep a separate but clean dress to wear in the hospital premises and change to a fresh washed dress whenever you go out of hospital premises.
16. Change your cloths more frequently than usual routine and wash them adequately preferably by dilute hypochlorite (household bleach) solution, sundry them for at-least two hours and wear

them only after thorough ironing [7-9].

17. After your tiring duty hours, whenever you reach home (hostel), wash your hands again thoroughly with a good quality sanitizer and take a warm water bath with adequate soap rub before going for dinning. Take healthy and well-balanced protein rich meals and drink enough warm fluids to keep your body well hydrated.
18. Take adequate rest and good sleep (8 hours).
19. Drink warm fluids and hot beverages regularly. Take enough quantity of immune boosting and citrus foods. You may also chew a tablet of Vitamin-C before starting your duty. Stop smoking; at least during this pandemic.
20. Do not socialize much and try to remain within the hospital campus whenever you are off from duty. Do not roam around unnecessarily and if possible, also try to avoid visiting your family during the peak of this epidemic.
21. Don't welcome the guests at your official residence in the hospital campus.
22. Avoid attending the social and religious gatherings during the period of this highly infectious pandemic. Lest you may unintentionally infect the fellow praysers.
23. And last of all; do not panic in any situation i.e. all HCP should be careful but not fearful. Pray regularly; this will give you mental solace and energy to work with the zeal to fight COVID-19 world war.

## Conclusion

The infection control is the primary measure to prevent person-to-person transmission of this COVID-19 virus and to halt the propagation of this pandemic. Respiratory droplet and contact precautions are most effective under all circumstances. Adhering to hand hygiene practices and to other small infection control tips by HCP may decrease the chances of HCP getting infected themselves and transmitting this virus to the general patients and general population. All HCP should join hand to douse the flames of this COVID-19 world war.

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