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சுகாதார மற்றும் சுதேசவைத்திய ச வைகள் அமைச்சு  
Ministry of Healthcare and Indigenous Medical Services

All Provincial Directors of Health Services  
All Regional Directors of Health Services  
All Medical Officers of Health

**Interim guidance on rational use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for community health staff**

Considering the current country situation with regards to COVID-19, the main infection prevention and control measures are hand hygiene, the correct use of personal protective equipment (PPE) and proper waste management.

PPEs are worn to minimize exposure, thereby reducing the risk of infection to healthcare workers. PPE includes gloves, surgical masks, goggles or a face shield, and gowns, as well as for specific procedures, respirators (i.e. N95 or FFP2 standard or equivalent) and aprons. These different types of PPEs should be used in different combinations as relevant to the health settings and nature of the work.

It is important to ensure the rational use of PPE given the limited availability and the capacity to increase the PPE supply. It is important to remember that the most effective preventive measures include:

- proper hand hygiene by washing properly with soap and running water, and use of alcohol-based hand rub;
- avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth;
- practicing respiratory hygiene by coughing or sneezing into a bent elbow or tissue and then immediately disposing of the tissue;
- Maintaining social distance (a minimum of 1 metre) from persons with respiratory symptoms.

This guidance is intended for field health staff, to minimize their risk of infections, while ensuring the rational use of available PPE, during interactions with their community and with other sectors in the field. Healthcare staff should discard PPE in an appropriate manner after use and perform hand hygiene before and after the use of PPE.

These guidelines are in addition to the following and focus on community health workers;


- Guidance on the rational use of personal protective equipment (PPE) in hospitals in the context of COVID-19 disease by the Epidemiology Unit – 15/03/2020
- Interim guidelines for field maternal and child care services during the outbreak of COVID-19 infection of the Family Health Bureau (FHB/MCU/COVID 19/2020) - 17/03/2020
- Interim guidance on rational use of personal protective equipment (PPE) for coronavirus disease (COVID-19) by the World Health Organization - 19 March 2020

Guidance may be updated as per the changes in disease transmission pattern and new evidence.

| Staff category | Activity  | Type of PPE or procedure  |
|----------------|---|---|
| MOH            | Home visits for people on home quarantine or when investigating patients suspected to have COVID-19 | <p>Surgical mask<br/>Maintain spatial distance of at least 1m</p> <p>The interview may be conducted outside the house and the person who is quarantined should wear a surgical mask.</p> <p>If the interview is conducted inside the house, proper hand washing must be performed as soon as entering the house of the client and before leaving the house</p> <p>(Hand sanitizer should not replace hand washing with soap and water)</p>  |
|                | Other home visits (As far as known where no people are on home quarantine)                          | <p>Maintain spatial distance of at least 1m</p> <p>Proper hand washing must be performed as soon as entering the house of the client and before leaving the house</p>   |
|                | Conducting clinics  | <p>Triage of clinic attendees and address those with respiratory symptoms first, if possible in a different room and using different equipment such as BP apparatus, stethoscope, measuring tape, etc</p> <p>Use of surgical mask is recommended when examining an attendee with respiratory symptoms</p> <p>A surgical mask may be worn for the whole duration of the clinic if this is more feasible</p> <p>Proper hand washing or use of hand sanitizer before and after each attendee</p> |
|                | Discussions or training   | Maintain spatial distance of at least 1m  |
| SPHI/ PHI      | Home visits for people on home quarantine or when investigating patients suspected to have COVID-19 | Same as for MOH (refer above)   |

|              |   |   |
|--------------|---|---|
|              | Other home visits (As far as known where no people are on home quarantine)                          | Same as for MOH (refer above)   |
|              | Discussions or trainings  | Same as for MOH (refer above)   |
| PHNS/SPH/PHM | Conducting clinics  | <p>Triage of clinic attendees and address those with respiratory symptoms first, if possible in a different room and using different equipment such as BP apparatus, stethoscope, measuring tape, etc</p> <p>Use of surgical mask is recommended when examining an attendee with respiratory symptoms</p> <p>A surgical mask may be worn for the whole duration of the clinic if this is more feasible</p> <p>Proper hand washing as required</p> |
|              | Home visits (As far as known where no people are on home quarantine for COVID-19)                   | <p>Proper hand washing must be performed as soon as entering the house of the client and before leaving the house</p> <p>(Hand sanitizer should not replace hand washing with soap and water)</p>   |
|              | Home visits for people on home quarantine or when investigating patients suspected to have COVID-19 | <p>Surgical mask</p> <p>Maintain spatial distance of at least 1m</p> <p>If the interview is conducted inside the house, proper hand washing must be performed as soon as entering the house of the client and before leaving the house</p>  |
|              | Postnatal visits in locked down areas   | <p>Full PPE set (NIOSH approved N-95 mask; impermeable isolation gown; two pairs of gloves; eye protection (goggles or face shield); surgical hood or cap; and covered shoes and fluid resistant shoe cover or boot)</p>  |

The full package of PPE would not be used in the majority of these settings and the guidance above is to be followed. Provincial and Regional Directors are advised to consider these guidelines when making requests for PPEs.

  
**Dr Anil Jasinghe**  
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CC: Additional Secretary (Public Health Services)  
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