

5 STEPS

for Managing patients with COVID-19 at home:

Tips for health care providers

THIS INFORMATION IS TO AID ANY HEALTHCARE PROVIDER WHO MAY NEED TO MANAGE A COVID-19 PATIENT.

STEP 1



Determine if the patient has COVID-19.

If you suspect someone has COVID-19, arrange testing according to local protocols.

If they have severe breathlessness, confusion, chest pain, or are unable to take care of themselves, admit them to a hospital immediately.

If a COVID-19 test is negative and symptoms persist, the test may need to be repeated, or there could be another cause.

STEP 2



Advise the patient to do the following:

- Isolate from other people, and rest, in a separate, well-ventilated room if feasible, or more than 1 metre away from others
- If feasible, the patient should also use a separate bathroom
- Drink plenty of fluids to stay hydrated
- Have a nutritious diet
- Wear a mask.
- Use separate utensils for food and drink, avoid speaking during the meal
- Open their windows to improve ventilation

Manage fever: Provide paracetamol for fever, headache or body ache (check dose for weight and dose, for adults >50kg, 500-1000mg at least 4 hours between doses, maximum 4g/4000mg per day including any combination medications). If fever continues despite this, tell the patient to place a cold wet cloth on the forehead.

STEP 3



Based on their risk¹, check their oxygen level with a pulse oximeter if possible, with instructions on how to use it and what to do with the result. A possible approach follows:

- a. **If oxygen saturation is 94% or above:**
 - i. Check oxygen saturations with pulse oximeter 3 times a day for those with symptoms who have risk factors for severe disease¹
 - ii. Continue with steps 2 & 3
- b. **If oxygen saturation is 90% or more, but less than 94%:**
 - i. Seek hospital care
 - ii. Consider if use of oxygen is needed
 - iii. Prescribe steroids if oxygen treatment is needed (dexamethasone 6mg/daily, OR prednisone 40mg/daily OR methylprednisolone 32mg daily)
 - iv. Consider if prone positioning, or other repositioning may improve oxygenation, if the patient is able, but weigh against potential risks
- c. **If oxygen saturation is less than 90%:**
 - i. Arrange hospital care immediately
 - ii. Treat with oxygen, usually starting at 5 litres per minute with titration to response
 - iii. Prescribe steroids (dexamethasone 6mg/daily, OR prednisone 40mg OR methylprednisolone 32mg daily)
 - iv. Advise prone positioning, or other repositioning, if safe to do so

STEP 4



Continue with steps 2 & 3

In all situations, If they have severe breathlessness, confusion, chest pain, or are unable to take care of themselves, admit them to a hospital immediately.

STEP 5



Advise and counsel the patient's family on the following:

- a. Only one person in the household should be the carer for the patient
- b. The other members of the household should stay in a separate room from the patient, if possible, or keep a distance of at least 1 metre
- c. Everyone should wear a mask properly.
- d. While providing food for the patients, the carer wear a mask properly, and maintain distance
- e. Everyone in the household should wash their hands regularly with soap and water or use a hand sanitizer
- f. Windows should be opened for ventilation
- g. Food should be served to the patient in disposable plates or utensils kept separate
- h. Surfaces should be frequently sanitised
- i. Monitor the household for symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 (see step 1)

¹ Risk factors for severe disease according to WHO guidance:

- Age more than 60 years (increasing with age).
- Underlying noncommunicable diseases (NCDs): diabetes, hypertension, cardiac disease, chronic lung disease, cerebrovascular disease, dementia, mental disorders, chronic kidney disease, immunosuppression, obesity and cancer have been associated with higher mortality .
- In pregnancy, increasing maternal age, high BMI, non-white ethnicity, chronic conditions and pregnancy specific conditions such as gestational diabetes and pre-eclampsia .
- Smoking.