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:

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

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**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.

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**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 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)

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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.