

# Stay Safe and Stay Positive

A guide to managing mild  
COVID-19 disease at home

# The most common COVID-19 symptoms reported are:

- new continuous cough
- fever
- fatigue
- muscle aches
- shortness of breath when moving around
- sputum production
- loss of appetite/taste/smell
- diarrhoea

If you are diagnosed with COVID-19, or if you have symptoms but cannot get tested, this is what you should do:

- Stay at home for 14 days
- Do not go to work
- Do not use public transport
- Do not go to public places
- Do not go shopping
- Do not visit anyone
- Do not attend religious gatherings
- Do not have visitors in your home
- Do not leave unless you need medical care
- Do stay calm
- Do ensure you have family members on hand who can help you to get shopping and things you may need.
- Do keep connected to people you care about by phone and video calls.

# What is the difference between isolation and quarantine?

## **ISOLATION**

- You have tested positive for the virus or you have symptoms and likely have COVID-19
- You need to avoid contact with other people for
  - 14 days after your test if you have no symptoms
  - 14 days after your symptoms started if you have mild disease
  - 14 days from the last day you needed oxygen if you have been treated in hospital with severe disease

## **QUARANTINE**

- You have been exposed to someone with the virus
- You don't have symptoms
- You need to avoid contact with other people for 14 days after your exposure to the person with COVID-19
- If you develop symptoms you are considered to also have COVID-19

# If you test COVID-19 positive, you should isolate:

- Separate yourself from other people in your home, in a well-ventilated bedroom. Your family should not stay or sleep in the same room as you.
- Use a separate bathroom. If you have to share a bathroom, clean after every use.
- Avoid sharing items and the same spaces with other people and clean surfaces often.
- Stay at least 1.5 metres (3 steps) away from other people in the home.
- Wear facemasks to help prevent the spread of the disease to others.
- Cough or sneeze into the fold of your elbow. Alternatively, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and dispose of tissue in a dedicated bin.
- Clean your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or with alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains 60-95% alcohol.

If you do not isolate yourself correctly, you may infect others.

# What should the rest of your family do if you are positive?

- All close contacts should quarantine for 14 days from the day of your positive test.
- If any family member develops any symptoms it is not necessary for them to be tested as well. They should be treated as if they are positive and follow the same advice.

## What is a close contact:

- Face-to-face encounter with a probable or confirmed case
- Both were not wearing masks
- Within less than one (1) meter
- For more than 15 minutes

# You are at greatest risk for severe disease and need more careful monitoring if you:

- Are older than 60 years
- Are overweight and unfit
- Have medical conditions like
  - Hypertension
  - Diabetes
  - Chronic kidney, heart or lung disease
  - Cancer
  - HIV or TB



- Consider getting a pulse oximeter. This is an easy-to-use device which measures the oxygen saturation (level) in your blood and helps to identify early on when you are in need of medical attention
  - The oxygen saturation should always be greater than 92%

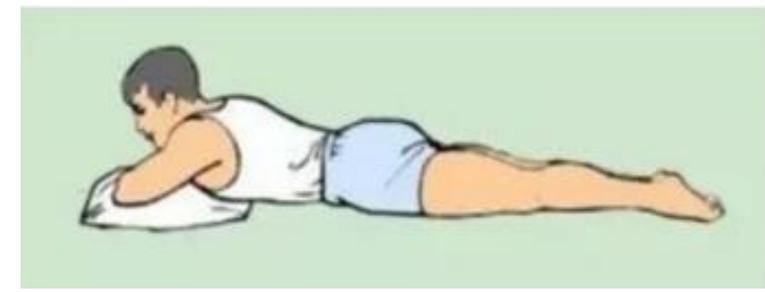
# Strengthen your immune system

- Eat healthy meals, drink water, sleep well, get plenty of rest but also remember to stay active.
- Stop smoking!
- Take the following vitamins:
  - zinc 200mg daily
  - vitamin D 50 000iu once off
  - vitamin C 1000mg daily
  - vitamin B complex 1 tablet daily
- Make sure your underlying medical conditions are well controlled:
  - take your hypertension, diabetes and other medicines correctly and on time
  - monitor your blood pressure and sugar if you have the equipment at home
- Do not take steroids or hydroxychloroquine or any medicines you have heard of in the media. Many of these treatments have not been proven to work and some are reserved for seriously ill patients who are being treated in hospital.

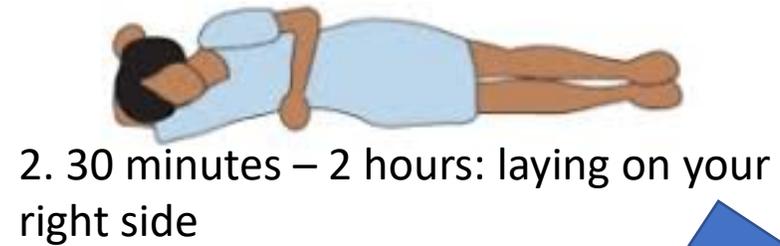
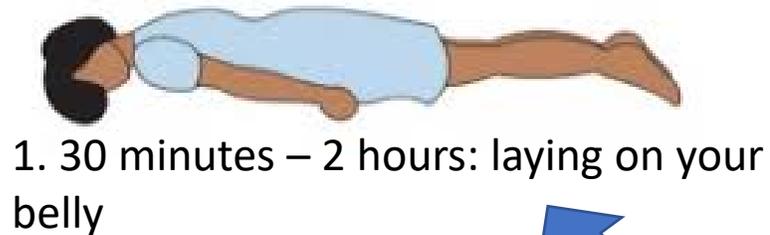
# Use the usual cold and flu remedies to relieve your symptoms:

- Take Panado for fever and pain
- Drink warm honey and lemon water or use lozenges to relieve sore throats
- Do warm water and salt gargles twice daily
- Steam or use humidifier with eucalyptus or Vicks as dry air is not good for your lungs
- It is not harmful to use traditional remedies like black seed, turmeric, ginger and other natural substances known for their anti-inflammatory properties

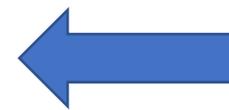
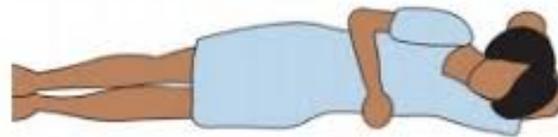
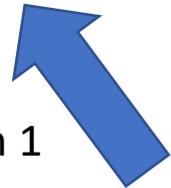
# If you feel a little short of breath:



- Sleep on your stomach for as much as possible with your head turned to the side (prone position)
- It helps to prop a pillow lengthwise underneath your head and chest for this
- You can also cycle between laying on your belly, on your side and sitting up



Then back to Position 1



4. 30 minutes – 2 hours: laying on your left side

3. 30 minutes – 2 hours: sitting up

# Breathing exercises to clear your lungs and improve flow of oxygen:

The idea is to get the lower part of your lungs to expand so that any mucus that's collecting there can be dislodged and coughed out



## DEEP BREATHING and FORCED EXPIRATION

Take a deep breath in through the nose.

At the end of it, hold your breath for five seconds.

Then breathe out through the mouth.

Do this five times — five breaths total.

Next, take a sixth deep breath in, then at the end of it cough strongly — covering your mouth when you do so.

The six breaths plus cough at the end represent once cycle. Repeat this cycle twice.

## PURSED-LIP BREATHING

Breathe in through your nose and breathe out at least twice as long through your mouth, with pursed lips.

## BELLY BREATHING

Lie on your back. Bend your knees.

Breathe deeply through your nose, allowing your chest and belly to expand.

Breathe out through your mouth at least twice as long as your inhale.

Perform for 1 minute.

Then, rest for 30 seconds.

You can also blow up balloons as breathing against resistance helps to expand the chest

# When should you seek medical help?

- If your symptoms are worsening
- If your symptoms have not improved after 7 days
- If you become confused or have difficulty concentrating
- If you develop a new fever or your fever returns
- If you develop chest pain
- If your breathing becomes difficult, and the number of breaths you take in one minute (respiratory rate) is more than 25
- If your oxygen level on the pulse oximeter is lower than 92%

Call the doctor or arrange a virtual medical consultation rather than go to the GP's rooms.

Or call an ambulance and go to the hospital.