

## **CDC GUIDANCE**

### **Transmission**

COVID-19 is primarily transmitted from person-to-person through respiratory droplets. These droplets are released when someone with COVID-19 sneezes, coughs, or talks. Infectious droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs. A physical distance of at least 1 meter (3 ft) between persons is suggested by the World Health Organization (WHO) to avoid infection, although some WHO member states have recommended maintaining greater distances whenever possible<sup>1</sup>. Respiratory droplets can land on hands, objects or surfaces around the person when they cough or talk, and people can then become infected with COVID-19 from touching hands, objects or surfaces with droplets and then touching their eyes, nose, or mouth. Recent data suggest that there can be transmission of COVID-19 through droplets of those with mild symptoms or those who do not feel ill<sup>2</sup>. Current data do not support long range aerosol transmission of SARS-CoV-2, such as seen with measles or tuberculosis. Short-range inhalation of aerosols is a possibility for COVID-19, as with many respiratory pathogens. However, this cannot easily be distinguished from “droplet” transmission based on epidemiologic patterns. Short-range transmission is a possibility particularly in crowded medical wards and inadequately ventilated spaces<sup>3</sup>. Certain procedures in health facilities can generate fine aerosols and should be avoided whenever possible.

### **Standard and Transmission-Based Precautions**

Standard Precautions are a set of practices that apply to the care of patients in all healthcare settings at all times. Standard precautions remain the cornerstone of infection prevention. Application of these precautions depends on the nature of the health worker-patient interaction and the anticipated exposure to a known infectious agent. Standard precautions include:

- Hand hygiene
- Personal protective equipment
- Respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette
- Cleaning and disinfection of devices and environmental surfaces
- Safe injection practices
- Medication storage and handling

Transmission-based precautions are a set of practices specific for patients with known or suspected infectious agents that require additional control measures to prevent transmission. These precautions are used in addition to standard precautions.

### **COVID-19: Transmission-Based Precautions:**

Current WHO guidance for healthcare workers caring for suspected or confirmed COVID-19 patients recommends the use of contact and droplet precautions in addition to standard precautions (unless an aerosol generated procedure is being performed, in which case airborne precautions are needed)<sup>1</sup>. Disposable or dedicated patient care equipment (e.g., stethoscopes, blood pressure cuffs) should be used; however, if equipment needs to be shared among patients, then it should be cleaned and disinfected between use for each patient (ethyl alcohol of at least 70%).

Additionally, adequately ventilated single rooms or wards are suggested. For general ward rooms with natural ventilation, adequate ventilation for COVID-19 patients is considered to be 60 L/s per patient. When single rooms are not available, suspected COVID-19 patients should be grouped together with beds at least 1 meter (3ft) apart based on WHO’s recommendation, although some member states have recommended maintaining greater distances whenever possible. COVID-19 isolation rooms or wards should have dedicated bathrooms, which should be cleaned and disinfected at least twice daily.

Additionally, healthcare facilities can also consider designating healthcare workers to care for patients with COVID-19 and restrict the number of visitors allowed in the facility.

Transportation of patients with COVID-19 should be avoided unless medically necessary. If a patient is deemed medically necessary to be transported, a mask should be placed on the suspected or confirmed COVID-19 patient. Healthcare workers should also wear the appropriate PPE when transporting patients.