

COVID-19 PANDEMIC GUIDANCE DOCUMENT VERSION 2 – APRIL 2020



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PREPARE

STEPS TO PREPARE THE
PHARMACY TEAM TO
COMBAT THE OUTBREAK

PREVENT

INFECTION PREVENTION
AND CONTROL FOR
COMMUNITY PHARMACIES

MANAGE

MANAGING
PHARMACEUTICAL SUPPLY

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

GUIDANCE DOCUMENT FOR MALAYSIAN PHARMACISTS

PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This document is the Malaysia Pharmaceutical Society's (MPS) recommendations for pharmacists to act in response to an outbreak of a new respiratory disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus or Covid-19. By the 11th March 2020, this disease is now classified as a pandemic, having affected more than 200 countries with more than 725,000 infected cases (by 30th March 2020) worldwide. Locally, the situation is dire and all pharmacists must take action to combat this disease.

The purpose of this document is to provide relevant information and guidelines on coronavirus Covid-19 outbreaks for pharmacists and the pharmacy workforce to assist in preventing the spread of the disease and contributing to its efficient management in the healthcare system.

PREPARE YOUR TEAM

ENSURING SAFETY AND CONTINUITY OF PHARMACY SERVICES

STAY INFORMED AND UP-TO-DATE ABOUT THE LOCAL COVID-19 SITUATION

Pharmacists are responsible custodians of right information. To that end, have a list and check official websites, applications or text messages to monitor the real time situation and anticipate needs.

Do not share unverified information and check your teams' new sources to see if they are reliable and accurate. When in doubt, refer to official press releases (and not media outlets or social media for information).

IMPORTANT RESOURCES

- (1) National Security Council (NSC) <https://t.me/MKNRasmi>
- (2) Ministry of Health Covid-19 portal <http://www.moh.gov.my/index.php/pages/view/2274>
- (3) Ministry of Health (KKM) Twitter <https://twitter.com/KKMPutrajaya>
- (4) CPRC Ministry of Health (KKM) <https://t.me/cprckkm>
- (5) Ministry of Health Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/kementriankekesihatanmalaysia/>
- (6) WHO Covid-19 Centre <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

ESTABLISH RELATIONSHIPS WITH KEY HEALTHCARE AND PUBLIC HEALTH PARTNERS IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Pharmacists need to make sure that they know about the key healthcare and public health resources within their communities. This includes doctor clinics (general practitioners), local screening facilities for patient referrals and other pharmacies / alternative suppliers for essential medicines and stock shortages.

CREATE AN ACTIVE LIST OF COMMUNITY RESOURCES AND THEIR CONTACTS

PREPARE YOUR STAFF FOR EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

Staff preparation to deal with emergency situations is essential in management of the outbreak. The pharmacist must serve as the leader and establish an emergency plan to deal manage COVID-19 presentation in their pharmacies. Contents of the emergency plan may include, but not limited to, HR management, drug supply management, epidemic prevention, management of presenting cases, information reporting, etc.

KEY POINTS TO BRIEF STAFF:

- (1) Cleaning and disinfecting procedures
- (2) Reporting to their supervisors if they have a travel or contact history or suspected COVID-19 symptoms
- (3) Roles & responsibility of each staff
- (4) Identified staff member to be responsible in event of COVID-19 presentation
- (5) Need to avoid contact, isolation procedures
- (6) Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) if required
- (7) Referral and Screening locations

COVID-19 IDENTIFICATION

DOES THE PATIENT HAVE CLINICAL SYMPTOMS? INCLUDING: -

- **FEVER** or **COUGH (with or without fever)**
- **SHORTNESS OF BREATH (with or without fever)** AND, has the patient
- **RECENTLY TRAVELED TO AN AT-RISK AREA 14 DAYS BEFORE** or
- **BEEN IN CLOSE/CASUAL CONTACT IN 14 DAYS** with a **CONFIRMED CASE**

If the patient does not have the above, proceed with normal protocols with care.



FOR SUSPECTED CASES

- Immediately give patient(s) and accompanying persons a surgical mask and ensure it is fitted correctly
- Ensure all staff dealing with patient(s) are wearing protective gear (mask, gloves, eye gear).
- Avoid direct physical contact with the patient(s) and exposure to respiratory and other secretions
- Escort the patient(s) to a designated area/room to discuss their condition
- Assist the patient(s) to contact the designated testing center in your area to arrange to be assessed and tested.
- If patient(s) is seriously unwell, immediately arrange for transport to designated hospitals (if necessary by ambulance)
- If patient(s) is able, instruct them to return home and self-isolate until they can be tested
- After consultation, remove protective gloves/gown, eye protection and masks separately, performing hand hygiene each time

EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST

HEALTH MINISTRY CRISIS PREPAREDNESS & RESPONSE CENTRE (CPRC) NATIONAL HOTLINES:
03-88810200 / 03-88810600 / 03-88810700 Email: cprc@moh.gov.my

STATE CPRC HOTLINES:

PERLIS 04-976 6317 (Mon-Fri: 8am-5pm) 019-278 0408 or 019-400 1070 (After office hours/PH) Email: cprc.pls@moh.gov.my	KEDAH 04-774 6081(Sun-Wed:8am- 5pm) 04-774 6063 (Thu: 8am-3.30pm) 04-774 6072(Fri-Sat/PH:8-12pm) Email:vektor.kdh@moh.gov.my
PENANG 04-262 9902 (Mon-Fri: 8am-5pm, Sat-Sun/PH: 10am-2pm) Email: epid_penang@moh.gov.my	PERAK 05 – 243 3962(Mon-Fri: 8am-5pm, Sat-Sun/PH: 10am-2pm) Email: cprcprk@moh.gov.my
SELANGOR 03-5123 7251 or email: bgdenggisel@moh.gov.my (Mon-Fri:8am-5pm) 03-5123 7252 or email: cprc_sel@moh.gov.my (Sat-Sun/PH:9am-2pm)	KUALA LUMPUR 03-2697 7710 or 03-2697 7730 (Mon-Fri:7.30am-5.30pm) 03-2698 3757 (Sat-Sun/PH: 11am-3pm) Email: cprckl@moh.gov.my
NEGERI SEMBILAN 06-764 1326 (Daily:8am-5pm) Email: cpbv_ns@moh.gov.my	PAHANG 09-570 7910, 09-570 7914 or 09-570 7909 (Mon-Fri:9am-5pm) Email: cprc_pahang@moh.gov.my
MELAKA 06-288 3019 or 06-234 5999 (Mon-Fri:8am-5pm) 06-288 3019 (Sat-Sun/PH: 10am-2pm) Email:cprcmelaka@moh.gov.my	JOHOR 07-238 2217 (Sun-Wed:8am-5pm) 07-236 3305 (Thurs: 8am-3.30pm) Email: cprcknj@gmail.com
TERENGGANU 09-619 6269 (Su-Wed:8am-5pm) 09-635 3752 (Thu:8am-3.30pm) (Fri-Sat/PH: 9am-3.30pm) Email: kpbv.trg@moh.gov.my	KELANTAN 09-747 2089 (Sun-Wed:8am-5pm, Thu: 8am-3.30pm, Fri-Sat/PH: 8am- 12pm) Email: cprc_kel@moh.gov.my
SABAH 088-219455, 088-512531 or 088- 512533 (Mon-Fri:8am-5pm) Email:sbhccprc@moh.gov.my	SARAWAK 082-443248 (Mon-Fri: 8am-5pm, Sat-Sun/PH: 9am-3pm) Email:cprc_sarawak@moh.gov.my
LABUAN 087-410973 or 016-919 5425 (Mon- Fri:8am-5pm), 016-9195426 (Sat- Sun/PH) Email: cprclabuan@gmail.com	OTHERS: National Disaster Management Agency 03-8870 4800

HIGHLIGHT USE OF MASKS / IMPROVE HYGIENE

Wearing a medical mask is one of the prevention measures to limit the spread of respiratory diseases including COVID-19. However, **the use of a mask alone is insufficient to provide an adequate level of protection** and other measures need to be implemented.

The WHO recommends that health care workers wear a medical mask but it must be combined with hand hygiene with an alcohol based hand rub or soap and water. Please refer to the infographic to the right for steps.

In addition, pharmacy staff needs to change/wash coats more often and avoid the wearing of accessories such as bracelet, watches and rings. The pharmacists need to ensure masks are also **reserved for the management of suspect cases**.

MANAGE PATIENTS' EXPECTATIONS & PROVIDE EDUCATION

Manage expectations by informing patients about any changes in your pharmacy's policies, additional precautions, telephone based patient care services, opening hours and supplies. Make signages and instructions clear and visible in order to avoid confusion. Consider clarifications and updates on online platforms or social media.

MAKE A CONTINUOUSLY UPDATED EMERGENCY CONTACTS LIST AVAILABLE

Pharmacists need to make sure that there is an updated list of contact numbers of all possible referral facilities within and near your community. This essential contact list should be readily available and shared when required.

MANAGE STAFF AVAILABILITY / ACCESS

During the outbreak, there exists a high possibility of staff absenteeism due to unforeseen circumstances. Prepare alternate staffing plans – including an option to divide your staff into two shifts to manage any potential contact to COVID-19 cases. In addition, provide a 'letter of authorisation' to each staff to ensure that if there are movement restrictions, they are easily verified and allowed to proceed to the workplace.

MAKE DAILY UPDATES AND CHECKS WITH YOUR TEAM


Share current information on COVID-19 and potential for surge with all staff. Please monitor their condition both physical and mental for the duration of the outbreak. Address issues as soon as possible. Conduct regular temperature checks with all staff and record testing results.

PROTECT YOUR PATIENTS AND YOUR STAFF

The pharmacy must not contribute to the transmission of COVID-19 within the community and must provide continued service. To that end, steps need to be taken to help identify cases whilst implementing appropriate prevention measures.

Medical masks can be used to prevent the spread of respiratory infections.

There are 2 main types of medical masks: **face masks** and **N95 respirators**.



Face masks fit more loosely and prevent the wearer from spreading large sprays and droplets when coughing or sneezing.

N95 respirators fit more tightly and prevent the wearer from inhaling smaller, airborne infectious particles. N95 respirators are not recommended for use by the general public.

Face masks should only be used by

- ✓ Individuals with symptoms of respiratory infection such as coughing, sneezing, and sometimes fever
- ✓ Health care workers
- ✓ Persons taking care of or in close contact with someone with a respiratory infection

How do I use a face mask?

- 1 Wash hands for at least 20 seconds prior to putting on a face mask.
- 2 Place face mask over nose and mouth. Ensure a tight seal with no gaps and secure elastics or straps.
- 3 Avoid touching the front of the face mask. If you do, wash hands for at least 20 seconds.
- 4 Remove the face mask without touching the front. Discard in a closed bin.
- 5 Wash hands again for at least 20 seconds.

EXPECT DIFFERENT REACTIONS FROM DIFFERENT PATIENTS

During this time, many patients will first seek help from community pharmacies, straining resources. When interacting with patients during this situation, it is understandable that emotions may run high. Therefore, please train your team on conflict resolution and remind them to take a calm and objective approach. Please consider varying health-seeking behaviour, such as, and not limited to:

- (1) Worried Healthy – Unnecessary and possibly panic buying. Please advise patient on prevention and to follow any public health directive by staying at home
- (2) Unworried Sick – Patients that do not follow preventive measures yet presenting with symptoms. Check temperature, provide mask and refer to designated testing centres (if needed)
- (3) Bearer of Fake News – Advise patient to refer to valid sources of information and correct them if possible.
- (4) At-Risk Groups – Please advise patients from at risk groups (elderly) to take extra precautions to prevent the disease.

TRAIN STAFF ON PROTOCOL AFTER A SUSPECTED PRESENTATION

In the event of a suspected presentation, manage the situation as per the following protocol

- (1) Keep the door shut / area cordoned off
If needed, shut down operations of the pharmacy and prevent unnecessary personnel from entering
- (2) Air the room by opening windows if possible
Do not utilise the area until disinfected. The person cleaning the room/area should wear gloves, gown and surgical mask.
- (3) Utilise registered disinfectant such as 70% alcohol, sodium hypochlorite 1,000ppm (complete list below) and detergents to clean the affected area.
Waste from the potentially contaminated area should be removed and discarded as clinical waste
- (4) If a suspected case has spent time in a communal area – waiting area or toilet facilities – these areas should be cleaned with a detergent and disinfectant as soon as possible.
After cleaning, areas can be returned to general use.

PREVENT INFECTION

INFECTION PREVENTION & CONTROL STEPS - COMMUNITY PHARMACIES

OPENING HOURS

- Adjust OPENING HOURS to hours based upon the availability of staff but ensure that the new opening times must provide minimal service to the community in terms of medicines supply,
- In case of any changes to opening hours, new opening hours should be COMMUNICATED CLEARLY to the public in a visible place outside the pharmacy.

ACCESS TO PHARMACY / ATTENDING AREA

- LIMIT ACCESS of the public to the pharmacy. Access to products on self-selection by customers should be restricted to avoid multiple people touching the same products. Consider temperature check at entrances.
- OPTIONS to limit access include but is not limited to: -
 - Institute a ONE-WAY system on Entry and Exit to the pharmacy
 - LIMIT ACCESS to customers where product selection is ONLY SELECTED by pharmacy personnel (placing a cordon/barrier)
 - Cordon off the entire pharmacy shop floor with a limited/restricted service area at the front of the pharmacy (or pass-over table).
 - Dispensing medicines or products via a small window on the door or façade, like those used for night services (if available)
- Access should also be limited to suppliers and deliveries. As such supply of medicines and products should be done in a way without anyone external to the pharmacy staff entering the pharmacy. Additionally, the cases used by wholesale distributors for the delivery of medicines should be cleaned and disinfected before they are taken inside the pharmacy facilities.

DISINFECTANTS ACTIVE INGREDIENTS & WORKING CONCENTRATIONS VS COVID-19

- (1) Hydrogen Peroxide (0.5%) (1 min)
- (2) Benzalkonium Chloride (0.05%) (10m)
- (3) Chloroxylenol (0.12%) (10 min)
- (4) Ethyl alcohol (70%) (10 min)
- (5) Iodine in Iodophor (50ppm) (10m)
- (6) Isopropanol (50%) (10m)
- (7) Povidone-iodine (1% iodine) (1 min)
- (8) Sodium Hypochlorite (0.05-0.5%) (5m)
- (9) Sodium Chlorite (0.23%) (10m)

Ref: NEA Singapore (23rd March 2020)



HYDROXYCHLOROQUINE & COVID-19 PREVENTION

Hydroxychloroquine is currently indicated for the treatment of patients with malaria and autoimmune diseases, including systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) and rheumatoid arthritis (RA).

The use of hydroxychloroquine on hospitalized COVID-19 patients in various countries was only based on a few in-vitro experiments, case studies and non-randomised clinical trials.

Currently, clinical trials are still ongoing to determine if hydroxychloroquine is safe and effective to prevent COVID-19 infections before and after being exposed to the virus.

Hence, there is **NO** recommendation over the use of hydroxychloroquine to **PREVENT** COVID-19 infections. Long-term improper use of hydroxychloroquine may result in serious complications, e.g. retinopathy or cardiotoxicity (when combined with azithromycin).

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HONESTY IS THE BEST POLICY.

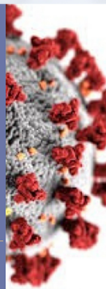
ESPECIALLY WHEN DISCUSSING COVID-19.

Giving incomplete or inaccurate information to healthcare providers can endanger your life.

And theirs

#Don'tLieToUs

Malaysian Pharmaceutical Society



OBTAIN THE LATEST COVID-19 RELATED SIGNAGES FROM THE MPS



PREVENTIVE ADVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

Individuals without respiratory symptoms should: -

- Avoid large gatherings and closed crowded spaces.
- Maintain a distance of at least 1 metre from any individual with respiratory symptoms (cough, sneeze).
- Perform hand hygiene frequently with an alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water.
- If coughing and sneezing, cover the nose and mouth with a disposable tissue and discard tissue immediately after use and perform hand hygiene. If tissue is unavailable use a flexed arm.
- Avoid visits to elderly people in their homes or nursing homes.

NOTICES TO PATIENTS / CUSTOMERS

Place a notice at the entrance of the pharmacy with the main recommendations that patients and customers must adopt before entering, such as (and not limited to) :-

- (1) Limit of patients / customers allowed into the pharmacy at one time
- (2) Avoid long stays in the pharmacy
- (3) Disinfect your hands when entering the pharmacy
- (4) Make sure you keep a distance of 1-2 meters between you and other customers and pharmacy staff (see section below)
- (5) Do not walk outside the floor markings (if any)
- (6) If you sneeze and cough, cover your nose and mouth with a disposable tissue or with a flexed elbow
- (7) Avoid shaking hands or have close contact within the premises
- (8) Prepare in advance your medicines / product requests or prescriptions you need to fill.
- (9) Avoid visiting the pharmacy if they are elderly or have co-morbidities
- (10) Be Honest with the health professional with regards to your condition, travel history and relevant health information.

SOCIAL DISTANCING

- Limit the number of patients / customers allowed to enter the pharmacy at any one time. This is dependent on the size of the premise.
- Establish a safe distance of a least 1 meter (more if possible) when attending to patients / customers.
- Advise the patients to keep a safe distance of 1 metre between them while waiting and use tape to mark on the floor to indicate where they may stand.
- Demarcate areas to stand clear off (such as between lines) and dispensary area
- If necessary, use a tray to collect prescription, medication lists, hand over medications and process the payment.
- Minimise interaction – advise patients to only speak when necessary.

AT THE COUNTER

- Whenever possible, allocate one employee per station or location and avoid swaps and interactions.
- Clear the counter area of all unnecessary objects to avoid contamination. Wipe and disinfect counter after each patient.
- Have an alcohol-based solution at hand to disinfect hands after attending to each patient.
- If conducting point of care tests (measurement of blood pressure, cholesterol, glycaemia) and any other services that require direct contact with patient – use face mask, gloves and eye protection.

OTHER USEFUL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Make available hand sanitizers at strategic points in the pharmacy (entrance, counter) for use of both staff and patients.
- Encourage the use of e-wallets and credit cards to minimise the exchange of cash. If using credit cards, encourage the use of wireless payment (such as Visa Wave) and if pin is required, wipe down terminal after each patient.
- Encourage sick employees to stay home. Check temperature of your staff daily and record the results. All personnel who develop respiratory symptoms should be instructed not to report to work.



MANAGING PHARMACEUTICAL SUPPLY

ENSURING CONTINUING SUPPLY OF PATIENT MEDICATIONS IN COVID-19 SITUATIONS

ENSURE SUPPLY	USE RATIONALLY	PROMOTE ACCESS	STAND UNITED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the availability of essential medicines • Pharmacists to take charge of procurement, storage and distribution • Compile a list of substitute medicines to recommend to patients • Prepare a list of alternative suppliers to ensure continuity of supply 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit dispensing to prevent panic buying • Strictly enforce rational use of medicines. Pharmacists should ensure that only those who need the medications gets them • Avoid providing symptomatic relief to patients with respiratory symptoms and refer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In situations with movement restrictions, pharmacies can play a major role for continuing access to medicines • Consider home deliveries, not only for COVID-19 but for other conditions such as non-communicable diseases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under COVID-19 conditions, work together with other pharmacists and/or doctors as a team • Share resources/ supply to provide the best possible solution to patients • Exchange of ideas and experience is essential in times of crisis

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