

Guidelines for Providing Home Care.

The present Pandemic Influenza A H1N1 is of moderate severity. Large number of cases are mild requiring only home isolation and symptomatic treatment. Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India has already prepared guidelines for categorization of patients during screening (available on the website –mohfw.nic.in). For category A & B, home isolation and treatment is recommended. These guidelines need to be followed for such category of patients.

Guiding Principles:

- Patient should :
 - Be informed about the illness during screening.
 - Stay home for seven days, preferably isolate himself / herself in a well ventilated room.
 - Avoid common areas frequented by other members of the family.
 - If the living space is small and more than one person need to sleep in a room, ensure that the head end of patient and others sleeping in that room are in opposite direction (head to toe).
 - Wear mask all the time. Three layered surgical mask should be provided by the hospital / community health worker. If mask is not readily available, mouth and nose should be covered with a piece of cloth/handkerchief.
 - Avoid smoking.
 - Avoid close contact with others. If inevitable, they should always maintain an arm's length.
 - Avoid having visitors.
 - Avoid going into the community, school, office, markets.
 - Wash hands frequently.
 - Self monitor health and report to identified health facility in case of worsening of symptoms.

Treatment:

- Mild influenza illness does not require specific anti viral medicine.
- Medicines should be taken only on advice of the health care provider.
 - Paracetamol for fever and ibuprofen for myalgia can be taken as per the advice of health care provider.
 - Oseltamivir to be taken, if prescribed/advised by the doctor only.
 - Children need to be given paediatric preparation and dosage of the above drugs.
- Aspirin should not be given for fever or body ache. Medicines (other than paracetamol) available for fever, headache, body ache in general groceries, pan shops etc should not be taken as they may contain aspirin.
- Patients should take plenty of fluids, rest and do warm saline gargles.

Early Warning signs

Patients advised home care should look for the early warning signs mentioned below:

- Fever remains high and not responding
- There is difficulty in breathing or pain in the chest while breathing,

- Coughing of blood tinged sputum
- Sensorium gets altered with change in behavior (confusion, incoherent speech etc), loss of consciousness
- In particular, patients with co-morbid condition (hypertension, diabetes, bronchial asthma, chronic bronchitis or Obstructive airway diseases etc) need to be observed for worsening of symptoms.
- In young children, irritability, not accepting feeds, vomiting, fast breathing rate and seizures are signs that needs immediate attention and doctor's consultation.

Chemoprophylaxis to the contacts:

- All the contacts need to self monitor their health.
- Chemoprophylaxis to house hold contacts would be as per the policy decision taken by the Government which would be based on the severity of disease and stage of the pandemic.
- If there is community spread, then chemoprophylaxis of family and social contacts is not recommended. However, house hold contacts having co morbid conditions would be put on chemoprophylaxis.

Infection Control

- The infection control practices listed in the guiding principles would be followed including frequent hand wash, cough etiquettes, maintaining arms length from others.
- The contact surfaces would be disinfected by wiping, with sodium hypochlorite solution or with house hold bleach (5%) solution.
- Masks, tissue papers should be disposed of in dustbins. Hands should be washed after handling these wastes.
- Utensils used by the case should not be used by others without washing.
- Wash hands with soap and water before and after handling linens and towels used by the patient.

In case of need:

- Contact NICD outbreak Monitoring Cell at : 011-23921401
- Look for updates at www.mohfw.nic.in.