



THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA  
MINISTRY OF HEALTH



# **BASIC INFORMATION FOR COVID-19 PATIENTS UNDERGOING HOME BASED ISOLATION AND CARE**

*Stay Safe & Stay Healthy*

## **01. What is Home Based Isolation?**

This is when a patient confirmed to have COVID-19 is mandated to restrict activities and movements outside their home unless when seeking medical care. During the entire period of home-based isolation, the patient should not go to public places like workplaces, school, market, churches, meetings etc. The patient should not also use public transport like taxis, buses and shared boda-boda rides.

## **02. What is Home Based Care?**

This is when a COVID-19 patient is provided the required care directly in the home by a care giver who may be a family member, a friend or a member of the local community while cooperating with the advice and support from the trained health workers and strictly following the home based isolation standards and other COVID-19 prevention & control measures.

## **03. Why home-based Isolation and Care?**

Ever since the epidemic started, the Ministry of Health (MOH) issued a policy to admit all COVID-19 patients in health care facilities. In Uganda, the epidemic has expanded, and the health care system is constrained by the fast-growing number of positive cases that get admitted to health care facilities. To ease the constraint posed on the health facilities, the Uganda Ministry of Health (MOH) has provided an option of advising some

categories of COVID 19 patients to undergo isolation and care at their homes. For example, asymptomatic patients or those with mild disease or those who are not at risk of developing severe disease can undergo home-based isolation and care not to overwhelm the health facilities.

#### **04. Importance of home-based isolation and care standards/guidance**

Suppose a COVID 19 patient is assessed and advised to undergo isolation at home, he or she has the responsibility to stay at home and away from other people to prevent the spread of the virus to others who might include family members, friends, and the wider community. More precautions should be taken to stay away from the vulnerable individuals who might be in the home. The vulnerable include the elderly (above 60 years) or people with impaired immunity due to other illnesses like diabetes, HIV/AIDS, cancer, and other chronic illnesses (like high blood pressure, chronic kidney disease, and chronic lung diseases). Strict adherence to the home isolation guidance will significantly reduce the overall amount of infection any household member could pass on to others in the community.

**05. Who is eligible for Home-Based Care? This will be determined by a designated Health Care Worker (HCW) or a Health Assistant after the assessment. The criteria include:**

1. Newly confirmed or Suspect COVID-19 patient described as below:
  - Has no symptoms or has mild illness
  - Patient with no known risk of developing complications or progressing to severe COVID-19 disease.
  - Patient who lives in a home that meets the criteria for home-based isolation
  - Patient who demonstrates understanding of the rationale of why people need to stay home when sick until cleared for discharge/de-isolation.
2. Any patient discharged from treatment center for home care.

**06. The necessary adjustments to make the home suitable for home-based isolation and care**

You will be helped to understand the necessary adjustments or requirements that may have to be considered to make the home suitable for home-based isolation through the entire isolation period and these include the following



- Preparing a separate room for isolation with adequate ventilation
- Availability of source of clean water for hand washing
- Availability of soap or other any other hand-hygiene products
- Availability of a designated adult caregiver who can regularly monitor the patient
- If possible, presence of a separate toilet/pit latrine
- If possible, presence of immediate access to a functioning telephone for communication
- There should be a guaranteed source of food
- The patient should be readily accepted at home by the family.
- There should be a health facility within reach of the home.
- Availability of community resource persons (VHT) linked to the home of the patient
- Reliable transport to rush to HF.

## **07. Patient's responsibilities under Home Based Isolation and Care**

- Must stay in a separate room and limit movements in the shared areas like bathrooms, toilet, kitchen etc.
- Must always practice infection prevention and control while at home.
- Accept to be monitored by the health care workers for at least 14 consecutive days from the date test was done while in isolation.
- Must agree to admission in case of symptom worsening that warrants hospital admission.
- Stay confined at home until fit for discharge or de-isolation according to the guidelines
- Only be visited by the care giver until is discharged or de-isolated.
- Always wear recommended cloth mask while in the shared places in the home.
- Have readily available disposable paper tissues/clean cloth for use whenever sneezing or coughing if cannot tolerate the mask
- Immediately discard paper tissue safely after use
- Practice social distancing of 2 meters while in shared areas if situation arises
- Regularly wash hands with clean water and soap before and after eating or using the toilet.
- Dry hands after washing using disposable paper towels/clean cloth/ towel which shall be washed, dried and ironed.

- Perform daily cleaning of surfaces in own isolation room with own cleaning supplies
- Regularly wash or clean own clothes and linen using clean water and laundry soap
- The clothes/linen should be exposed under the sun, dried and pressed using a flat iron.
- To monitor self-wellbeing and make daily observations whether the patient develops new or worsening symptoms including fever, cough, runny nose or flue like illness, sore throat, shortness of breath, headache, general malaise. If any of these arise, patient should inform the care giver and the health care provider or VHT for more advice.
- Waste generated at home while caring for a COVID19 client should be packed in strong bags and closed/tied completely before disposal and eventual collection by waste services. If such a service does not exist, waste may be buried.



## 08. Isolation Follow-up

- During the time you are undergoing home isolation, you will be provided with a daily monitoring tool where you or your care giver will write down any symptom that you may develop.
- You will also be expected to choose a convenient time during the day when you will be contacted by our system and respond to an automated call prompting you about any symptoms. This system will also be available for you to activate in case of a new or worsening symptom. If the call system is not activated for you, then you will have to use the USSD platform by dialing \*260# daily at a selected convenient time during the day to report on your condition.
- Where feasible, the HCWs or the VHTs from the health facility closest to you will periodically make phone contacts or physical visits to you or your care giver to monitor your well-being at home.
- In case the care giver notices or if you report worsening of symptoms then you or the care giver should notify the focal person at the Health Facility through a phone call and should immediately begin to prepare for evacuation to a designated COVID-19 treatment Centre.

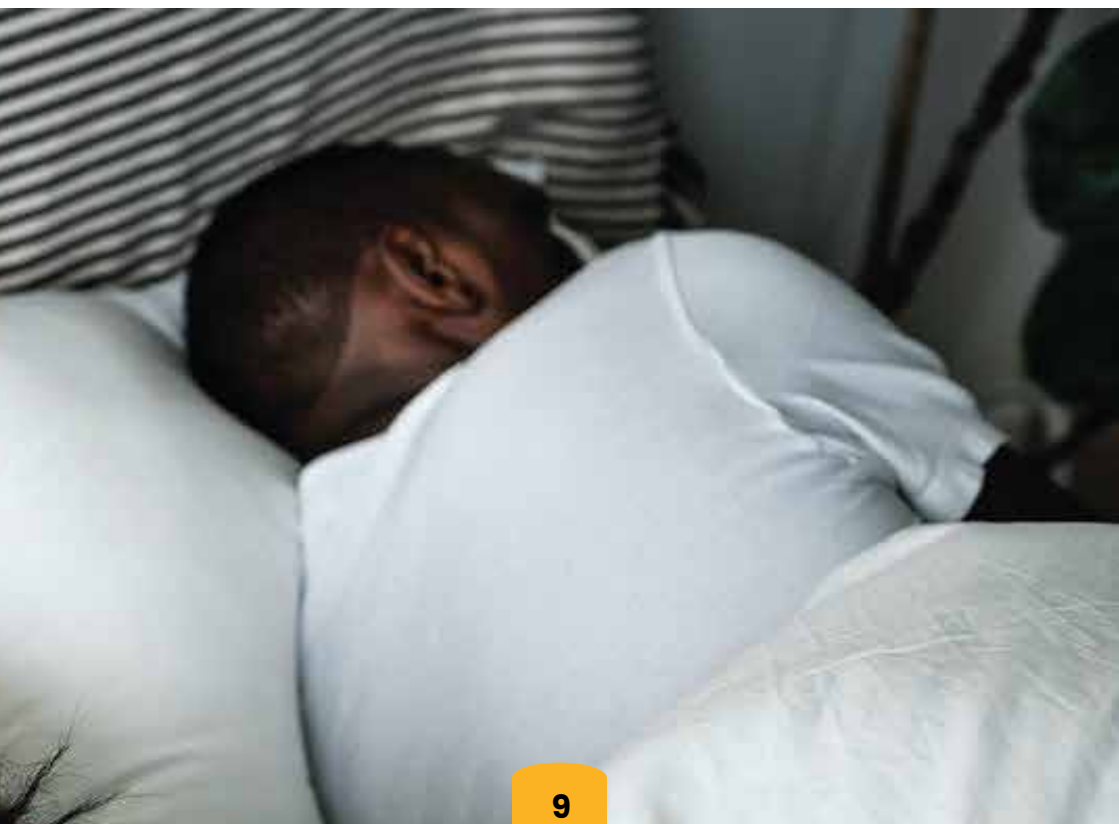


- Also, in case your care giver or any household member experiences or develops any new signs and symptoms to suggest COVID -19, then they should immediately report to the health facility or to the parent COVID -19 health facility. The affected member should ensure to immediately move to the HF to proper assessment and diagnosis.

## **09. Ways to prevent or cope up with the psycho-social challenges during home isolation.**

In order to prevent or cope well with the psycho-social challenges related to home isolation, you should try out any of the following measures that may be applicable

- Stay connected with family and friends and maintain their social networks via e-mail, social media, video conference, telephone, etc.
- During times of stress, pay attention to own needs and feelings.
- Engage in healthy activities that the patient enjoys and finds relaxing.
- Exercise regularly in ways that suit age and situation.
- Keep regular sleep routines, eat healthy food and keep well hydrated.
- Keep things in perspective. It may not be possible to be provided with everything one wants.



## 10. Responsibilities of the caregiver

- The caregiver should be one person only (if possible) who is in good health.
- First and foremost, you as care giver should take good care of yourself and ensure that you are always protected – Talk with your HCW or VHT if you need additional guidance on how to take care of yourself while caring for others.
- Caregiver should monitor the patient's wellbeing and ask the patient daily whether the patient develops new or worsening symptoms including fever, cough, runny nose or flue like illness, sore throat, shortness of breath, headache, general weakness
- Caregiver shall also look out for and report key danger signs including:
  - Rapid breathing
  - Difficulty breathing with or without abnormal chest movements
  - Difficulty swallowing
  - Fatigue
  - Abnormal behaviour
  - Seizures or convulsions
  - Inability to drink or eat
- If you, as caregiver, observe that symptoms are worsening – you should immediately contact the health care worker:
- When in doubt you can always reach your VHT or HCW at this toll-free number given below.

**11. Discharging or de-isolating:**

You will be discharged from home-based isolation in accordance with a criterion determined by a healthcare worker.

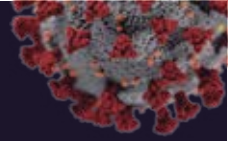
**12. Contacting the Health Care worker: in case of any medical emergency, you are advised not to panic, but instead, immediately contact the medical teams for help, or evacuation to the hospital.**

Please contact the Ministry of Health on a toll-free number: **0800100066 or 0800203033**. Please note that you are not charged any money when calling a toll free number, so, contact our team any time you need our services.

Do you need help?

Call us on:

0800 100 066



# “Wearing a Mask: Dos and Don’ts”



**✓ DO: Cover nose and mouth**



**✓ DO: Pull hair back**



**✓ DO: Tie straps behind head & neck**



**✓ DO: Remove by grabbing from the back**



**✗ DON'T: Pull below the nose**



**✗ DON'T: Wear on forehead**



**✗ DON'T: Pull below chin**



**✗ DON'T: Cross straps**



**✗ DON'T: Leave hair down face**



**✗ DON'T: Hang from one ear**



**✗ DON'T: Leave a strap hanging**



**✗ DON'T: Wear a dirty or wet mask**



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**For more information contact,**  
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