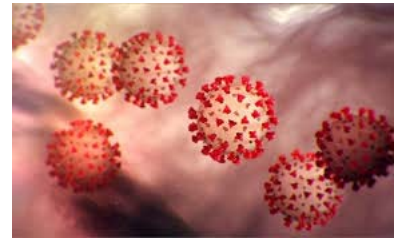


## **Q&A about COVID-19 Prevention and Testing in Lebanon: Important Matters to Discuss with Your Healthcare Professional**

*EL KHOURY Ghada, PharmD, BCACP; SACRE Hala, PharmD; FARAH Rita, PharmD, MPH, PhD;  
SALAMEH Pascale, PharmD, MPH, PhD*

### **WHAT IS COVID-19?**

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is a new strain, discovered in 2019, and not identified previously in humans. The recommendations you find in this document are intended to protect you and your loved ones.



### **WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF INFECTION WITH COVID-19?**

Common signs of infection may appear 2-14 days after exposure and include fever, dry cough, and shortness of breath. Some people might also experience sore throat, runny nose, and tiredness. In rare cases, infection can cause pneumonia and kidney problems.



### **HOW TO PREVENT COVID-19 INFECTIONS?**

1. Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or clean them with an alcohol-based (60° minimum) hand rub. *(See steps at the end of the document).*
2. Wash or disinfect your hands every time you touch objects frequently touched by other people, such as banknotes.
3. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
4. Practice respiratory hygiene by covering your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Then dispose of the used tissue immediately.



5. Avoid crowds and maintain a social distance of at least 2 meters if you have to go out and **stay home** as much as possible. Avoid going out unless it is really necessary, until told otherwise by health authorities.
6. At home or workplace, routinely clean surfaces and floors by diluted antiseptics, such as 1/10 chlorine (Javel) water. *(See detailed preparation at the end of the document).*
7. Wash everything you buy with soap and water when possible, or spray or wipe with an antiseptic solution.
8. Avoid public places and public transportations. Avoid directly touching surfaces exposed to other people, such as the lift, stairs, and door handles.
9. Avoid smoking. Limit waterpipe smoking. DO NOT share waterpipe with others.
10. If you are returning from a trip to any country, isolate yourself for 14 days, and monitor your symptoms.
11. Stay home if you feel unwell. Seek medical care early if you have fever, cough, difficulty breathing, or any other respiratory symptom.
12. Adopt a healthy diet and perform physical activity to boost your immune system. Have hot drinks regularly, and keep hydrated.



### WHEN TO WEAR A MASK?

If you are healthy, you only need to wear a mask if you are in contact with or taking care of a person with suspected COVID-19 infection.

Masks are effective only when used in combination with frequent hand-cleaning with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub.

Wear a mask if you are coughing or sneezing.

Consider wearing a mask if you have to go to a crowded place.

If you wear a mask, then you must know how to use it and dispose of it properly AFTER ONE SINGLE USE.



**WHEN TO WEAR GLOVES?**

Gloves are recommended for cleaning and disinfecting households, handling the laundry of an infected person, and removing garbage. There is no evidence to support wearing gloves otherwise. Dispose of the gloves by avoiding touching the side in contact with contaminated surfaces. Clean your hands immediately after removing the gloves.



**WHAT IS SELF-ISOLATION OR SELF-QUARANTINE?**

Self-isolation means avoiding situations where you could infect other people. This means all situations where you may come in contact with others, such as social gatherings, work, school/university, child care, athletic events, faith-based gatherings, healthcare facilities, grocery stores, restaurants, shopping malls, and any public gatherings.



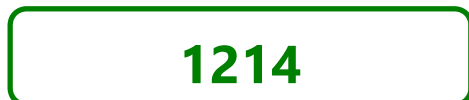
**WHAT IS A CLOSE CONTACT?**

A close contact is defined as a person who:

- 1) provided care for an infected individual or had other similar close physical contact without consistent and appropriate use of personal protective equipment, including healthcare workers, family members, or other caregivers; **OR**
- 2) lived with or had close, prolonged contact (within 2 meters) with an infected person; **OR**
- 3) had direct contact with infectious bodily fluids of the ill person (e.g., coughed or sneezed) while not wearing recommended personal protective equipment.

**GENERAL ADVICE TO ALL**

Follow the directions of the Ministry of Public Health and other local authorities. Call to report cases.



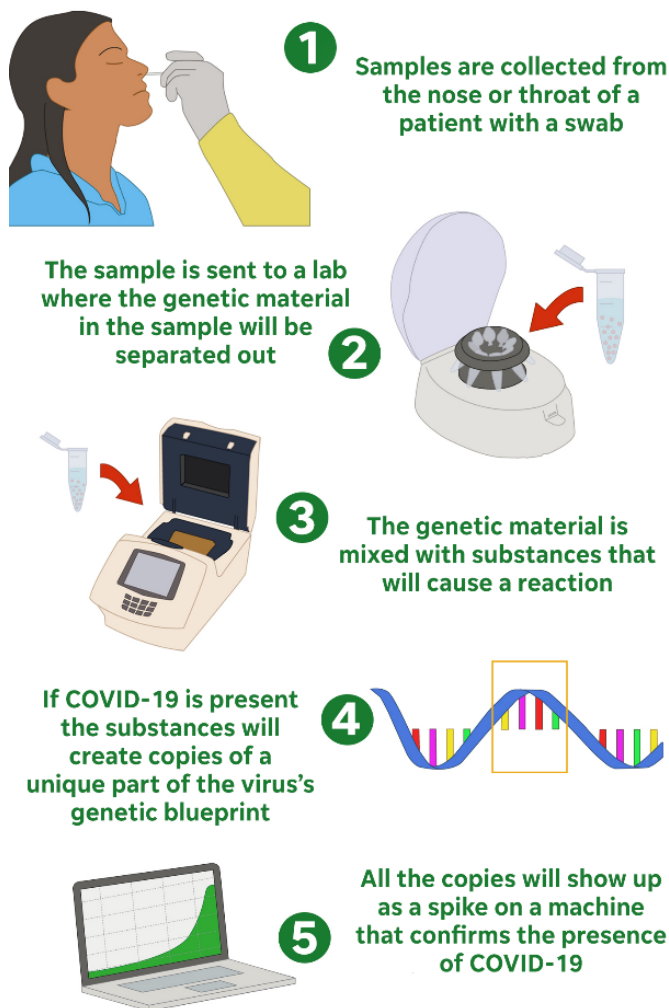
**COVID-19 STEP-BY-STEP DECISION-MAKING AID**

<b>STAY HOME</b>		
<p>You have no symptoms, no history of possible exposure to infected people, and no history of travel within the previous 14 days → STAY AT HOME</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ apply hygiene measures</li> <li>▪ avoid crowded places and increase your personal space from others, whenever possible</li> </ul>		
<b>SELF-MONITORING</b>	<b>SELF-ISOLATION</b>	<b>STRICT ISOLATION</b>
<p>You have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ no symptoms</li> </ul> <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ history of possible exposure to COVID-19 in the last 14 days</li> </ul>	<p>You have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ no symptoms</li> </ul> <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ history of probable exposure to COVID-19 in the last 14 days, due to travel or close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19</li> </ul>	<p>You have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ symptoms, mild to moderate</li> </ul> <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ your doctor tells you that have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or are waiting for the results of the lab test</li> </ul>
<p>MONITOR YOURSELF:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ stay at home</li> <li>▪ monitor yourself for 14 days, for one or more symptoms of COVID-19</li> <li>▪ avoid crowded places and increase distance with others</li> <li>▪ apply hygiene measures</li> </ul>	<p>SELF-ISOLATE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ stay at home and monitor yourself for symptoms, even if mild, for 14 days</li> <li>▪ avoid contact with other people to help prevent the spread of disease in your home and your community</li> <li>▪ apply hygiene measures</li> </ul>	<p>ISOLATE YOURSELF:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ stay at home until your Public Health Authority contacts you. Follow their instructions.</li> <li>▪ avoid contact with other people to help prevent the spread of disease in your home and your community, particularly people at high risk of severe illness outcomes, such as older adults or medically vulnerable people</li> <li>▪ Your Public health Authority will advise you when you are no longer at risk of spreading the virus to others</li> </ul>
<p>If you develop symptoms, isolate yourself from others immediately and contact your physician or <b>MOPH hotline</b> as soon as possible</p>	<p>If you develop symptoms, even if mild, stay home, avoid other people and contact your physician or <b>MOPH COVID-19 call center</b> as soon as possible</p>	<p>If your symptoms get worse, immediately contact your physician or <b>MOPH COVID-19 call center</b> and follow their instructions</p>
<b>HOSPITAL ADMISSION</b>		
<p>You have SEVERE SYMPTOMS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Put a face mask and go to the closest hospital Emergency Room, OR</li> <li>▪ Call MOPH Hotline and declare that you might have COVID-19</li> </ul>		

*Adapted from the Public Health Agency of Canada*

**WHAT IS A COVID-19 DIAGNOSTIC TEST?**

Besides staying home and adopting proper hygiene measures, the next step in preventing the spread of COVID-19 is to know **when** to test, **where** to test, and **how** to interpret the test. Samples are collected from the nose or throat of the patient and sent to the laboratory for testing. Adequate samples of expectorations are collected in sterile dry containers, while nasopharyngeal swab are placed immediately into sterile tubes containing 2-3 ml of viral transport media.



**If you DO NOT have any COVID-19 symptoms, you DO NOT need to be tested for COVID-19**

SOURCE: Republic reporting; illustration by Nicole Schaub

**RECOMMENDATIONS TO COVID-19 APPROPRIATE TESTING**

1. Get tested **ONLY** after consulting with a healthcare provider over the phone if possible, if you think you have been exposed or if you have clinical symptoms suggestive of a COVID-19 infection.
2. If recommended by the healthcare provider, the test has to be performed in an accredited laboratory to be accurate, reliable, and valid. Get tested at Rafik Hariri University Hospital or one of the 4 recommended laboratories by the Ministry of Public Health: American University of Beirut Medical Center, Hôtel Dieu de France Hospital, LAUMC Rizk Hospital, St George Hospital

University Medical Center - Beirut. More laboratories might become available for testing; always check with MOPH whether they are approved for testing.

3. **WEAR A MASK** on your way to the laboratory, in the room while waiting to get tested, and until you get totally out of the testing facility; as you might encounter positive people and get infected.
4. If you **SELF-TEST**, make sure the laboratory you choose is reliable.
  - a. Ask the laboratory questions on whether they are using the adequate kit (get the kit's name and look for its validity)
  - b. Make sure the laboratory is reporting results to the Ministry of Public Health.
  - c. If you get a **POSITIVE** result, report it immediately to your healthcare provider to get the guidance on the steps to follow.
  - d. If you get a **NEGATIVE** result, consult again with your healthcare provider to make sure it is not a FALSE NEGATIVE.
  - e. Even if your test is **NEGATIVE**, you are required to **keep on following the recommendations** to prevent COVID-19 infections.

#### **RISKS OF A FALSE NEGATIVE TEST**

It means your test shows negative results that are false. It can lead to an increased risk of spread of COVID-19 within the community.

HAVING A FALSE NEGATIVE TEST IS MORE SERIOUS THAN TESTING POSITIVE!


CONSULT WITH YOUR DOCTOR TO MAKE SURE THE TEST IS NOT A FALSE NEGATIVE

#### **HOW MUCH TIME BEFORE YOU GET THE RESULT?**

Depending on the laboratory, it might take 24-72 hours to have the result. In all cases, call your healthcare professional.

# How to Handwash?

WASH HANDS WHEN VISIBLY SOILED! OTHERWISE, USE HANDRUB

 Duration of the entire procedure: 40-60 seconds



Wet hands with water;



Apply enough soap to cover all hand surfaces;



Rub hands palm to palm;



Right palm over left dorsum with interlaced fingers and vice versa;



Palm to palm with fingers interlaced;



Backs of fingers to opposing palms with fingers interlocked;



Rotational rubbing of left thumb clasped in right palm and vice versa;



Rotational rubbing, backwards and forwards with clasped fingers of right hand in left palm and vice versa;



Rinse hands with water;



Dry hands thoroughly with a single use towel;



Use towel to turn off faucet;



Your hands are now safe.



World Health  
Organization

Patient Safety

A World Alliance for Safer Health Care

SAVE LIVES

Clean Your Hands

### HOW TO PREPARE 1/10 CHLORINE WATER TO DISINFECT SURFACES



**100 mL  
Bleach (5%)**



**900 mL  
Water**



**Disinfecting  
Solution (0.5%)**

- Mix the solution for 10 seconds, then close the bottle
- Keep the solution away from the light
- Use the solution within 24 hours
- Used to sterilize all surfaces and purchases, including canned and well-closed foods



### **MOPH Hotline: 1214 and 01/594459 To test for COVID-19**

**Rafik Hariri University Hospital: 01-830000**

**American University of Beirut Medical Center: 01-350000**

**Hôtel Dieu de France Hospital, Rodolphe Mérieux Lab: 01-615300; 01-331707**

**Saint George Hospital University Medical Center: 01-441000**

**LAU Medical Center Rizk Hospital: 01-200800**

#### **REFERENCES**

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/prevention.html>

<https://moph.gov.lb/ar/Media/view/27170/novel-coronavirus-2019->

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/lab/guidelines-clinical-specimens.html>

<https://www.sciencenews.org/article/coronavirus-testing-diagnostic-covid19-united-states>

<https://myhealth.alberta.ca/journey/covid-19/Pages/COVID-Self-Assessment.aspx>

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/when-and-how-to-use-masks>

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html>