



COVID-19 Advisory for Ophthalmologists

What we know-

- COVID-19 is highly infective disease caused by novel-Corona virus; WHO has declared it a Pandemic.
- Transmission may occur through droplets, contact and fomites; Tear samples of infected cases with or without conjunctivitis can carry the virus.
- The virus may be present on surface of door handles/knobs, mobile phones and other belongings of affected persons.
- Social distancing is a proven way to prevent transmission in the community.
- We need not panic but we should be prepared to handle the crisis responsibly.

What is the risk-

- The proximity between an Ophthalmologist and a patient during ophthalmic evaluation/procedure may pose an increased direct risk for transmission.

What are the precautions advised-

- Use of masks for mouth & nose and use of visor for eye protection; as well as liberal use of soap and water for hand wash/alcohol-based hand sanitizers cannot be overemphasized.
- Avoiding non-emergency/non-essential services in hospital OPD and OT as an abundant caution; it should help reduce chances of transmission and save vital resources for use where needed more.
- Notice/Posters requesting patients who are not suffering from any emergency condition to avoid entering clinic/hospital; they may be counseled over phone but not prescribed (since telephonic consultation is not allowed).
- History of any fever, cough and/or breathing problems; history of overseas travel in the last 2 to 3 weeks; history of any contact with a person who has travelled overseas recently or who is suffering from Covid-19; history of an occupation having contact with such infected persons – all these cases need to be referred and reported for further investigations at Govt. notified centres.
- Since fever (90%) is the commonest symptom, everyone entering the clinic may be screened with infrared thermometers wherever feasible; febrile patients may be referred for appropriate attention with proper listing of both patient and the staff.
- Frequently used ophthalmic equipments like slit lamps, ophthalmoscopes, retinoscopes, applanation prisms, contact gonioscopes, laser contact lenses, B-scan and ultrasound biomicroscope probes, computers keyboards etc. are to be decontaminated regularly.
- Anyone who suspects that the symptoms and signs of Covid-19 are there even after 4 to 5 days must seek appropriate medical attention themselves; need for self-quarantine is also important as a precaution.

What to do in a case suffering from Covid-19-

- For proven Covid-19 cases who need urgent ophthalmic care, a separate special examination room within a preferably isolated waiting area may be created manned with doctors and staff equipped with appropriate personal protective equipments which must include surgical gown, surgical gloves, N-95 masks with protective eyewear; All personnel coming in contact with the known infected case must be listed and later screened as per Govt. protocol.