



**衛生防護中心**  
Centre for Health Protection

**Infection Control Branch**

**Guidelines for Residential Care Homes for the Elderly (RCHEs) and Residential Care Homes for Persons with Disabilities (RCHDs) for the Prevention of Coronavirus disease (COVID-19)**

**I. Disease Information**

Please visit the following website for updated information related to COVID-19: <https://www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/index.html>

The Department of Health advises staff working in residential care homes (RCHs) and residents to take the following precautionary measures to minimize the risk of contracting and spreading COVID-19.

**II. Preventive Measures**

**A. General Advice**

- (a) Wear well-fitted surgical mask.
- (b) Perform hand hygiene properly when entering the institution, before touching your eyes, nose or mouth; before eating; after using the toilet; and touching public installations or equipment such as elevator control panels or door knobs. In addition, staff should perform hand hygiene at the beginning of the workday, before feeding residents, before and after touching residents and after touching their surroundings.



- (c) Perform hand hygiene whenever hands are possibly contaminated.
- (d) When hands are visibly soiled, wash hands with soap and water. When hands are not visibly soiled, clean hands by rubbing them with 70-80% alcohol-based handrub is an effective alternative.
- (e) When rendering personal care services for residents who are not wearing masks, e.g. feeding or performing oral care, staff should use eye protection (goggles or face shield).
- (f) Cover nose and mouth with tissue paper when sneezing or coughing. Dispose soiled tissue paper properly into a lidded rubbish bin and wash hands with liquid soap and water afterwards.
- (g) Do not share personal items such as eating utensils and towels.
- (h) Complete the vaccination course. The Government is implementing a territory-wide COVID-19 Vaccination Programme for all Hong Kong residents. Please visit <https://www.covidvaccine.gov.hk/en/> and <https://booking.covidvaccine.gov.hk/forms/index.jsp>
- (i) Undergo COVID-19 testing according to prevailing Government Policy.

## **B. Preparation of Hand Hygiene Facilities**

- (a) Provide liquid soap and disposable paper towels at places where there are handwashing facilities, e.g. toilets, kitchens, common rooms, activity rooms as indicated.
- (b) Provide 70-80% alcohol-based handrub in places where handwashing facility is not available.

## **C. Maintain Good Indoor Ventilation**

- (a) Keep windows open as far as feasible to increase fresh air supply.
- (b) Use of fans (e.g. wall, circulating or exhaust fan) in indoor spaces should be accompanied by means to increase air changes (e.g. opening windows or maximizing fresh air intake of air conditioners) at the same time. Minimize air blowing directly from one person (or group of people) to another.
- (c) If the air-conditioning system is used, ensure there is sufficient fresh air supply.

- (d) Keep air-conditioners well maintained. Clean the dust-filters of air-conditioners regularly.
- (e) Follow the recommendation as detailed in “A Supplement on Ventilation Guidelines on Prevention of Communicable Diseases in Residential Care Homes for the Elderly & Persons with Disabilities”  
[https://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/a\\_supplement\\_on\\_ventilation.pdf](https://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/a_supplement_on_ventilation.pdf)

#### **D. Social Distancing**

- (a) Avoid non-essential group activities.
- (b) Meal arrangement
  - i. Maintain adequate social distancing between residents.
  - ii. The dining area should be well-ventilated with adequate fresh air supply.
- (c) Residents should wear well-fitted surgical masks as far as feasible for activities in common areas e.g. watching TV.

#### **E. Designated Staff Team**

- (a) Arrange staff (especially those responsible for personal care service) to work in the same room(s)/ zone/ floor to care for the same group of residents as far as feasible. Avoid or reduce unnecessary staff deployment within the same RCH. Avoid deploying staff to work in different RCHs.

#### **F. Maintain Environment Clean and Hygienic**

- (a) Maintain good hygienic standard through cleaning and disinfection daily, please refer to **Annex I** for procedures of preparing and using diluted bleach. Keep rooms, kitchens, toilets and bathrooms clean and hygienic by using 1 in 99 diluted household bleach (mixing 1 part of household bleach containing 5.25% sodium hypochlorite with 99 parts of water), leave for 15 – 30 minutes, rinse with water and wipe dry. For metallic surface, disinfect with 70% alcohol.
- (b) Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces, furniture, commonly shared items and floor at least twice daily by using 1 in 99 diluted household bleach (mixing 1 part of household bleach containing 5.25%

sodium hypochlorite with 99 parts of water), leave for 15 – 30 minutes, rinse with water and wipe dry. For metallic surface, disinfect with 70% alcohol.

- (c) If places are contaminated by respiratory secretions, vomitus or excreta, use strong absorbent disposable paper towels to wipe them away. Then disinfect the surface and the neighbouring area with 1 in 49 diluted household bleach (mixing 1 part of household bleach containing 5.25% sodium hypochlorite with 49 parts of water), leave for 15 – 30 minutes, rinse with water and wipe dry. For metallic surface, disinfect with 70% alcohol.
- (d) Maintain drainage pipes properly and pour about half a liter of water into each drain outlet (U-traps) regularly (about once a week). For details, please refer to:  
[https://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/make\\_sure\\_the\\_trap\\_is\\_not\\_dry.pdf](https://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/make_sure_the_trap_is_not_dry.pdf)

## **G. Temperature Screening**

- (a) RCH should check the body temperature of all residents daily, so as to identify those with fever (oral temperature higher than 37.5°C, or ear temperature higher than 38°C). Those with fever, respiratory symptoms or sudden loss of taste or smell should wear a well-fitted surgical mask and prompt medical advice should be sought.
- (b) Staff should check their temperature before work every day. Those with fever, respiratory symptoms or sudden loss of taste or smell should refrain from work, consult doctor at once and inform the institution.

## **H. New Residents and Residents Newly Discharged from Hospitals**

- (a) Staff should help new residents and residents newly discharged from hospitals to wash their hair, bathe and change their clothes as soon as possible.
- (b) Pay extra attention to their health conditions.
- (c) Measure their body temperature at least twice daily and on a need basis for the first seven days.
- (d) Residents are advised to stringently observe personal hygiene.

## **I. Residents Who Need to Leave the Institution**

- (a) Residents who need to travel outside Hong Kong should inform the institution in advance to facilitate arrangement upon return. Refer to Section III.
- (b) If residents need to leave the institution, they should wear a well-fitted surgical mask, avoid staying in crowded places, maintain good personal hygiene and hand hygiene at all time. Residents should pay attention to hand hygiene when putting on and taking off the mask.
- (c) Residents should take shower and change clothes as soon as possible after returning from outside.
- (d) For residents who had home leave, the institution should enquire their contact history upon their return and pay attention to their health condition. Institutions should also continue their existing practice of isolating or cohorting residents returning from home leave and testing based on risk assessment. If any of their household members is under medical surveillance, or has household member under home isolation, no home leave should be arranged.

## **J. Visiting Arrangement**

- (a) For visiting policy, please follow the latest Government's announcement (including announcements by relevant Departments) with regards to testing or vaccination requirement.
- (b) The following people are not permitted to visit RCHs:
  - i. People who are under isolation,
  - ii. People who are symptomatic such as fever, respiratory symptoms or sudden loss of smell/taste at the time of visiting.
- (c) Family members / relatives may also contact residents or staff by other means (such as telephone and video communication).
- (d) Staff should communicate with family members / relatives and explain to them in advance the visiting arrangement and limitations.
- (e) To facilitate staggering of visiting time for the residents, visitors should make prior appointment with the institution before the visit.
- (f) The institution should review the actual circumstances (e.g. available space or facilities) , appropriately set the number of visitors per resident and the total number of visitors at any one time to avoid overcrowding.
- (g) Minimise the duration of stay of visitors in the institution.
- (h) Social distancing and infection control measures need to be maintained during the visits.
  - i. Check the body temperature of visitors.
  - ii. Visitors should perform hand hygiene and wear well-fitted surgical mask in the institution.
  - iii. Keep a visitors' attendance record (including name, contact number and date and time of visiting) to facilitate contacting the visitors, if necessary.
  - iv. Visitor should avoid any mask-off activity (e.g. eating and drinking) in the institution.
  - v. Residents should wear well-fitted surgical masks as far as practical,
  - vi. The institution should implement appropriate measures to ensure visitors maintain adequate social distancing with other people.
  - vii. Visits should be arranged at places with good ventilation and frequent cleaning and disinfection.

### III. **Management of Residents Returning from Travel outside Hong Kong**

- (a) Residents entering Hong Kong should follow the Government prevailing policy. For details, please refer to CHP website <https://www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/inbound-travel.html>
- (b) If the resident plans to stay in the institution, a room with good ventilation should be arranged for the resident for the entire duration of medical surveillance.
- (c) The resident should wear a well-fitted surgical mask as far as practicable.
- (d) Check the body temperature and observe for any symptoms daily.
- (e) If the resident needs to leave the room, put on a well-fitted surgical mask.
- (f) Staff should wear well-fitted surgical mask and other appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) based on risk assessment when providing care to the resident.
- (g) Environmental disinfection with 1 in 99 diluted household bleach (mixing 1 part of household bleach containing 5.25% sodium hypochlorite with 99 parts of water) at least daily for the room and at least twice daily for frequently touched areas.
- (h) All waste including discarded PPE should be managed as general waste.

### IV. **When there is a Case in the Institution**

Please follow prevailing policy to report cases.

## V. **Guideline on Prevention of Communicable Diseases in Residential Care Homes for the Elderly and Residential Care Homes for Persons with Disabilities**

Guidelines on prevention of communicable diseases in residential care homes for elderly and residential care homes for persons with disabilities issued by the CHP can be accessed at the following links respectively:

1. [http://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/guidelines\\_on\\_prevention\\_of\\_communicable\\_diseases\\_in\\_rche\\_eng.pdf](http://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/guidelines_on_prevention_of_communicable_diseases_in_rche_eng.pdf)
2. [https://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/guideline\\_prevention\\_of\\_communicable\\_diseases\\_rchd.pdf](https://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/guideline_prevention_of_communicable_diseases_rchd.pdf)

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## **The Use of Bleach**

Bleach is a strong and effective disinfectant. Its active ingredient, sodium hypochlorite, denatures protein in micro-organisms and is therefore effective in killing bacteria, fungi and viruses. Household bleach works quickly and is widely available at a low cost. Diluted household bleach is thus recommended for the disinfection of environment.

2. As bleach irritates mucous membranes, the skin and the airway, decomposes under heat and light and reacts readily with other chemicals, bleach should be used with caution. Improper use of bleach may reduce its effectiveness in disinfection and can injure users. Overuse of bleach will pollute the environment and disturb ecological balance.

### **Tools and Equipment**

3. Get all necessary tools and equipment ready, such as household bleach, measuring tools, containers and Personal Protective Equipment.

### **Preparing / Using Diluted Bleach**

- (a) Dilute and use bleach in a well-ventilated area.
- (b) Put on appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (e.g. mask, gloves, safety goggles and plastic apron) when diluting or using bleach as it irritates mucous membranes, the skin and the airway.
- (c) Mix bleach with cold water as hot water decomposes the active ingredient of bleach and renders it ineffective.
- (d) Bleach containing 5.25% sodium hypochlorite. Properly dilute the bleach to achieve appropriate concentration as follows:
  - (i) 1 in 99 diluted household bleach (mixing 1 part of 5.25% bleach with 99 parts of water) is used for general household cleaning and disinfection.
  - (ii) 1 in 49 diluted household bleach (mixing 1 part of 5.25% bleach with 49 parts of water) is used for surfaces or articles contaminated with vomitus, excreta and secretions.
  - (iii) 1 in 4 diluted household bleach (mixing 1 part of 5.25% bleach with 4

parts of water) is used for surfaces or articles contaminated with blood spillage.

- (e) Make adjustments to the amount of bleach added if its concentration of sodium hypochlorite is above or below 5.25%.
  - (i) Calculation: Multiplier of the amount of bleach added =  $5.25$  concentration of sodium hypochlorite in bleach
  - (ii) For example, when diluting a bleach containing only 5% sodium hypochlorite, the multiplier is  $5.25 / 5 = 1.05$ . That means  $10\text{ml} \times 1.05 = 10.5\text{ml}$  of bleach should be used when preparing a bleach solution.
- (f) Use a tablespoon or measuring cup for accurate measurement of the amount of bleach added.
- (g) Wash hands thoroughly after the procedure.

### **Precautions for the Use of Bleach**

- (a) Avoid using bleach on metals, wool, nylon, silk, dyed fabric and painted surfaces.
- (b) Avoid touching the eyes. If bleach gets into the eyes, immediately rinse with water for at least 15 minutes and consult a doctor.
- (c) Do not use bleach together with other household detergents as this reduces its effectiveness in disinfection and causes dangerous chemical reactions. For example, a toxic gas is produced when bleach is mixed with acidic detergents such as those used for toilet cleaning. This can result in accidents and injuries. If necessary, use detergents first and rinse thoroughly with water before using bleach for disinfection.
- (d) Undiluted bleach liberates a toxic gas when exposed to sunlight, thus store in a cool, shaded place and out of reach of children.
- (e) Sodium hypochlorite decomposes with time. To ensure its effectiveness, purchase recently produced bleach and avoid over-stocking.
- (f) For effective disinfection, use diluted bleach within 24 hours after preparation as decomposition increases with time if left unused.
- (g) Organic materials inactivate bleach; clean surfaces so that they are clear of organic materials before disinfection with bleach.