



## **COVID-19 (nCorona) Virus Outbreak Control and Prevention State Cell**

**Health & Family Welfare Department**

**Government of Kerala**

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### **COVID 19- Advisory on care of Ophthalmic Patients**

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COVID 19 pandemic has posed challenges to the health care services worldwide. While we fight the pandemic with all our strength, it is important to see that other disease burden is handled efficiently without interruption. This advisory stipulates the management of the patient for eye care.

#### **Patients:**

- All patients shall do hand wash with soap and water/sanitise their hands using alcohol based sanitizers before entering the hospital.
- Face masks for all the patients and their attendants shall be insisted
- A patient screening desk should be functioning before the patient reaches the reception counter.
- The personnel at the screening desk shall enquire details regarding fever, respiratory infection, travel history, contact with covid patients/suspects, coming from hotspot areas etc.
- All persons coming to hospital shall pass the "thermal screening".
- One meter distance shall be maintained between two patients and also between healthcare workers and patients

#### **Staff:**

- All staff should perform hand wash with soap and water/sanitise their hands using alcohol based sanitizers before entering the hospital.
- Any staff member with fever and/or respiratory tract infection should not report for duty.
- All staff should undergo thermal screening

## **Outpatient Department:**

- Seating to be arranged in a manner that patients should remain at least 1 meter from each other
- Face masks for all the patients and their attendants shall be insisted
- Provision of alcohol based hand sanitizers should be ensured
- All slit lamps to have acrylic/plastic/X-ray sheets attached so that the direct contact with the patients is avoided. Material used shall be cleaned with alcohol swabs ( to be cleaned every 2 hours)
- Clean hands with alcohol based sanitizers before touching any equipment once patient has been touched.
- Trial frames, lenses to be wiped with alcohol swabs after doing refraction for each case.
- Avoid aerosol generating procedures like non-contact tonometry as far as possible.
- Avoid nasolacrimal duct syringing as far as possible.
- Investigations and procedures like computerized visual field analysis, OCT, angiogram, ERG, gonioscopy, UBM, lasers etc that require close contact between patient and treating physician may be deferred if not urgent, subject to the discretion of the treating physician.

## **Operation Theatre / Invasive Procedure Practices**

- Elective surgeries like cataract, retinal lasers and investigative/invasive treatment procedures for glaucoma shall be taken up by the treating ophthalmologists on a case to case basis. Regarding various investigations and examination procedures, all examinations which are not very essential may be avoided and the patient and bystanders shall be briefed on the need for further investigations in the due course.
- General anaesthesia procedures involving intubation, extubation etc. shall be done with appropriate PPE.
- OT cleaning shall be performed meticulously
- Unnecessary entry or exit from the operating room shall be avoided as much as possible.
- If the OT in the hospital is getting reopened after a prolonged period, appropriate cleaning and microbiology culture shall be ensured.
- When a patient is being planned for surgery/ invasive procedures, covid-19 RT-PCR tests may be done as decided by the surgeons after

a detailed history taking if the patient is a covid suspect/patients from hotspot areas/history of outside state travel etc,

- Screening chest x-ray may be taken for all elective surgeries along with the routine investigations.
- The total number of surgery cases may be limited to allow sufficient time out ( about 20 minutes) between cases. Appropriate cleaning of surgical equipments, operating microscopes and O.T. in general shall be ensured.
- Choose the quickest possible surgical procedure which is appropriate for the patient.
- All universal precautions shall be followed.

### **Cleaning of Equipments and Lenses:**

- Alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol/disinfectant wipes ( wipes soaked in 70% isopropyl alcohol or 3% hydrogen peroxide) can be used to disinfect applanation tonometers, gonioscopes, slit lamp lenses, etc.
- Gonioscopes/PRP lenses should be cleaned in running water, wiped with gauze soaked in 70% isopropyl alcohol, and then dried before use.
- Non contact tonometers shall be avoided as they can create microaerosols which can disperse the virus.
- All camps shall be avoided till the pandemic is brought under control, to avoid congregation of people.
- Along with this the other general guidelines for all medical and surgical specialties shall be followed in case of ophthalmology also.

Resuming of elective surgeries/ procedures may be done as per the advisory issued from time to time by the State health authorities.

  
**Principal Secretary**