

Journalists' Guidance to Prevention of (COVID - 19)

**Quick Tips for
Journalists**

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Introduction

Journalism is considered one of the professions that always put its practitioners on the front lines. Starting from covering violent protests to armed conflicts and total wars between armies that do not hesitate to use the deadliest weapons against each other.

In all of that, the journalist finds himself/ herself familiar with the conflict parties, the areas of danger, and sometimes field journalists are trained on survival skills in even a flaming atmosphere. These skills ensure that the journalist can safely return from his field trips to write inspirational creative stories.

But the challenge this time is different. We are talking about a danger that surrounds everyone, everywhere. Every second may give the journalist a chance to be infected.

While voices are growing up to demand citizens to stay at homes and stop the economic activity in many sectors, journalists are still required to fulfill their responsibility to convey the truth to citizens, and to contribute in raising the societal awareness of this new threat that has swept the globe in a few months.

Therefore, this publication comes as an attempt by "The Egyptian Observatory for Journalism and Media" to support the journalists' personal safety, especially those working in field, in the face of spreading CoronaVirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). It contains a set of general guidelines based on the advices provided by the World Health Organization (WHO) for prevention in general, as well as a set of instructions and tips that benefit the journalists' category in particular.

Q&A About (COVID-19)

What is the Coronavirus?

Corona viruses are a large family of viruses that may cause disease in animals and humans. In humans, a number of coronaviruses are known to cause respiratory infections and illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). The newly discovered coronavirus disease causes (COVID-19).

What is (COVID-19) disease?

(COVID-19) is an infectious source animal disease, caused by the newly discovered coronavirus. There was no knowledge of this emerging virus and disease before the pandemic outbreak in Wuhan, China in December 2019.

Should I be worried about (COVID-19) disease infection?

The disease caused by infection with the coronavirus (COVID-19) is generally mild, especially in children and young adults. However, it can cause a serious illness, as about 1 in every 5 people with this disease will need hospital's care. So, it is natural for people to be concerned about how the outbreak of (COVID-19) disease affects them and their beloved ones.

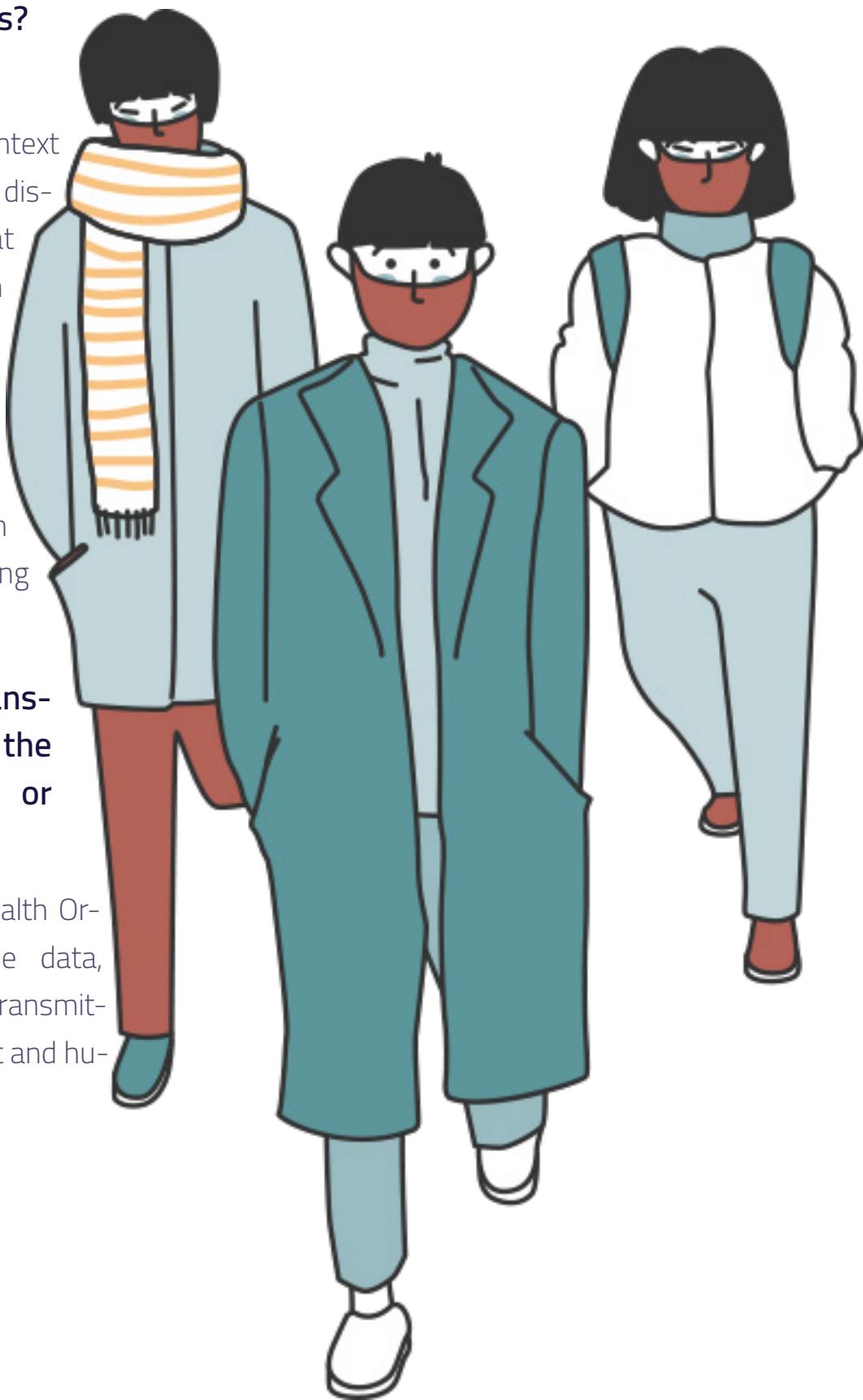


Who is at risk from a severe disease or lost their lives?

According to the current context of the epidemiological the disease spread, it appears that older people and people with pre-existing medical conditions (such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease) appear to be more vulnerable to becoming severely ill with the virus and deaths among them rise.

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Can (COVID-19) be transmitted in areas where the climate is hot, humid or during summer?

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) available data, (COVID-19) disease can be transmitted in all areas, including hot and humid weather areas.

Are there any vaccines or treatments that can prevent or treat (COVID-19) disease?

At the present time, there are no medications to prevent this disease. The World Health Organization (WHO) doesn't recommend the self-medication with any vaccines, including antibiotics, either to prevent or treat (COVID-19) disease.

Is there a vaccine, medication, or treatment for COVID-19 disease?

Until now, there is neither a vaccine nor a specific antiviral medication to prevent or treat (COVID-19) disease. However, those infected should receive a medical care to relieve the symptoms, and people with severe illness must be transferred to hospitals immediately.



Transmission methods and Symptoms of (COVID-19) infection



This disease is transmitted through droplets that are spread through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose when an infected person coughs or sneezes, so it's important that you also practice respiratory etiquette (for example, by coughing into a flexed elbow). These droplets land on objects and surfaces around the person. Other people then catch (COVID-19) by touching these objects or surfaces, then touching their eyes, nose or mouth. It is not known exactly how long the virus (COVID-19) will survive on surfaces, but it appears to be similar to other coronaviruses. Studies indicated that corona viruses (including the preliminary information about the virus that causes COVID-19 disease) may remain alive on the surfaces between few hours to several days. That may vary depending on the surrounding conditions (such as the surface type, temperature, or environmental humidity). People can also catch (COVID-19) if they breathe in droplets from a person with (COVID-19) who coughs out or exhales droplets. Therefore, it is important to stay more than 1 meter (3 feet) away from the person who is sick.

The World Health Organization (WHO) indicates that the studies conducted until now confirm that the virus causes (COVID-19) is transmitted primarily through contact with respiratory droplets rather than the air.

The most common symptoms of (COVID-19) disease are fever, tiredness, and dry cough. Some patients may have aches and pains, nasal congestion, runny nose, sore throat or diarrhea. These symptoms are usually mild and begin gradually.

Some people become infected but don't develop any symptoms and don't feel unwell. Most people (about 80%) recover from the disease without needing special treatment.

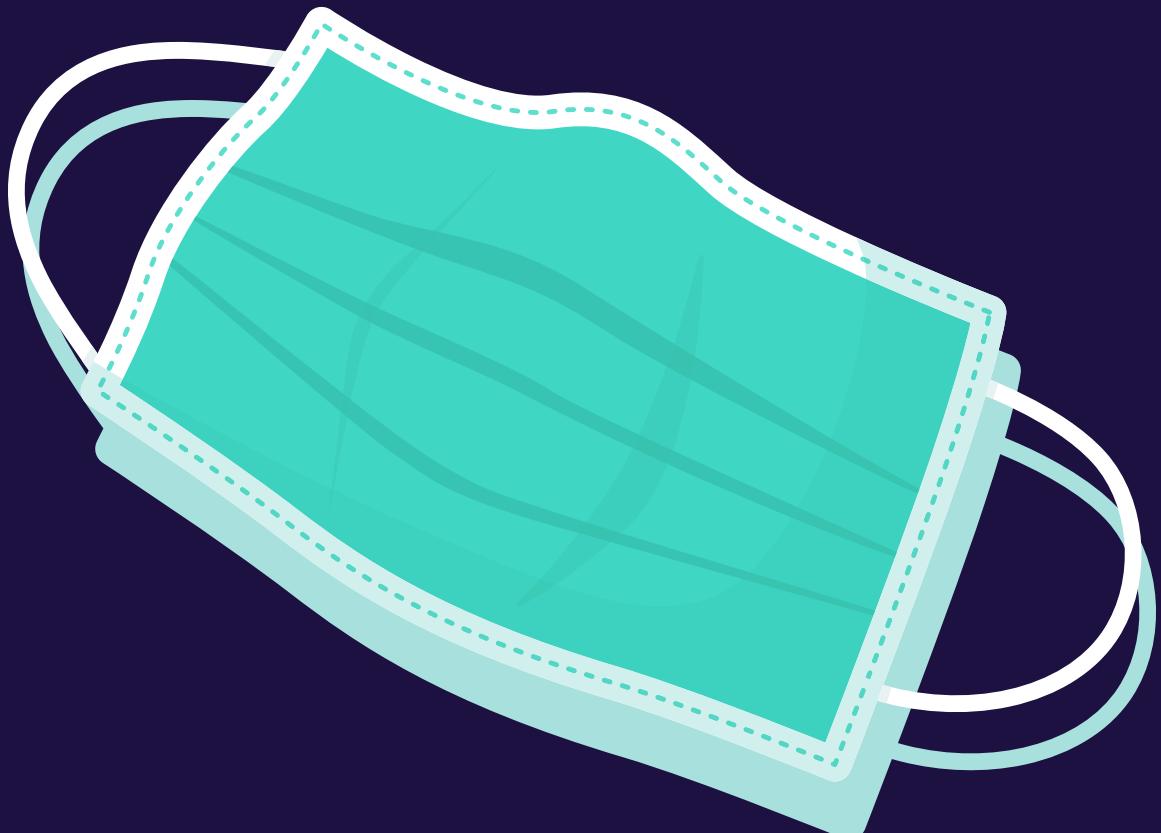
The severity of the disease intensifies in around 1 out of every 6 people who gets (COVID-19) becomes seriously ill and develops difficulty breathing.

The risk raises for older people, and those with underlying medical problems like high blood pressure, heart problems or diabetes, are more likely to develop serious illness.

About 2% of the infected people of the disease dead.

It is noted that the incubation period of (COVID-19) disease is around one day to 14 days, and it usually lasts for 5 Days. The incubation period is the duration from the infection to the onset symptoms of the disease. The infection may be transmitted from the person during the incubation period to others, so it is recommended to reduce the gatherings in general, not to reduce only gathering with people who show symptoms of the disease.

Basic protective measures against the new coronavirus (COVID-19):



In general, the following instructions should be observed for coronavirus prevention:

- Wash hands regularly inside and outside the home for at least 20 seconds with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer (with at least 70% alcohol content), as that will kill the viruses may be on your hands.
- Make sure to cover your mouth and nose with a tissue paper when coughing or sneezing, then throw the tissue immediately in the nearest waste bin and clean your hands with an alcohol disinfectant or with soap and water afterwards, as previously described. In case there is no tissue paper, you can bend the elbow, sneeze or cough at the elbow. But in all cases, do not use your hands to cover your mouth during sneezing or coughing, as this can lead to the spread of germs on the surfaces that you'll later touch.
- Avoid getting too close to people and stay more than 1 meter (3 feet) away from any person who coughs or sneezes.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. As your hands touch many surfaces and can catch the viruses. If your hands are contaminated, they may transmit the virus by your eyes, nose, or mouth and infect you.
- If you have a fever, cough, and difficult breathing, seek an immediate medical advice as you have a respiratory infection or other severe illness. Call the hotline number before going to the caregiver and tell them if you have traveled or contacted with any travelers recently.
- Stay updated with (COVID-19) disease, and follow up the advices provided by the Health care provider issued by local and national public health authorities or your employer regarding methods to protect yourself and others from (COVID-19) infection.
- Make sure that you follow good food safety practices all the time, by taking due care when handling raw meat, raw milk and animal organs to avoid contamination of uncooked food, and avoid eating raw or undercooled animal products. Also, while visiting alive animal markets, avoid the direct touch with animals and the surfaces in contact.
- Local and international medical bodies recommend committing to healthy lifestyle to improve the immune system's abilities, including sleeping well, eating healthy and balanced diet that contains a sufficient percentage of vegetables and fruits.

Measures for journalists to prevent (COVID-19) disease infection:



Preventive measures at the work place:

- Committing to the general prevention measures related to washing hands frequently, avoid touching the nose, mouth and eyes, covering the nose and mouth when coughing, and moving one meter away from any person showing symptoms of the disease.
- Reducing the journalists, employees and others within the work as much as possible, by transferring part of them to work from home if the assigned tasks are allowed, and divide the remaining employees to attend in different periods, to ensure that the work environment isn't crowded at any time of the day.
- Providing antiseptic materials (such as ethyl alcohol not less than 70%) in the entrances of the Journalism places and the departments as well as mainstreaming policy of cleaning hands for all employees and the visitors as soon as they get into the place. In addition to that, providing other protective tools such as tissue paper and encouraging workers to use them.
- Commitment to wipe the surfaces daily (desks and tables) and office supplies (telephones, keyboards ...) with disinfectants.
- Replacing glass cups and dishes with paper and plastic disposables for snacks and drinks.
- Preventing or reducing visits from strangers to the work place, and it is also possible to allocate a specific place to receive visitors to keep the work place safe.
- Replace the procedures that require face-to-face interviews, such as press interviews, with phone and internet interviews as long as possible.
- Prevent anyone has similar symptoms to (COVID-19) such as fever, dry cough, etc. ... from going to the work place, give him/she a compulsory leave at home, and provide him with the necessary medical care through the health authorities.
- Avoid handshaking and kissing as a greet way at the work place, because the virus can be transmitted by shaking hands and touching the eyes, nose and mouth, and be replaced with waving remotely, gesture or bowing instead.
- Commit to use a solution of 70% ethyl alcohol to disinfect custom equipment that is frequently used, and 0.5% chlorine (equivalent to 5,000 ppm) to disinfect surfaces that are frequently touched in the work place.
- Commitment to good ventilation for all facilities and locations of workers in particular.
- The local health authorities recommended that workers with chronic diseases and old people must be given long vacations during the current epidemic outbreak of (COVID-19), because they are the most at risk of infection.

Preventive measures for fieldwork:

- Committing to the general prevention measures related to washing hands frequently, avoid touching the nose, mouth and eyes, covering the nose and mouth when coughing, and moving one meter away from any person showing symptoms of the disease.
- Replace the procedures that require face-to-face interviews, such as press interviews, with phone and internet interviews as long as possible.
- If you are asked to do a field mission in a crowded place, it is important to remember the old advice to journalists covering public events: "Remember .. you are not a part of the event, the coverage is from the parties, not from inside the gatherings".
- Commit to use a cloth moistened with 70% ethyl alcohol solution to disinfect your equipment are frequently used for press matters.
- Avoid eating foods and drinks from the street, especially fresh food prepared by human element. Keep some homemade snacks in your bag, as well as your own bottle of water.
- Keep up-to-date on the latest information on (COVID-19) hotbeds epidemic (in cities or local places where the disease spread). Avoid traveling to these places as much as possible, especially if you are elderly, have diabetes, have a heart or lung disease.
- Ensure that you are committed to any restrictions imposed locally on travel, transportation, or large gatherings, to minimize the epidemic of (COVID-19) disease and always remember the golden advice: "The most important thing than the press story you working on, is that you can return to tell it".
- Don't wear rubber gloves in public places to prevent the infection. Keep washing your bare hands guarantees a better protection than the rubber gloves will do because it is possible to get infected with the virus through the gloves if you touched your face, the virus can be transmitted then to you.
- The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends not to wear masks except for the infected and those dealing with them from health teams and others, not for healthy people. If you are not trained to use the medical masks in a proper scientific manner, it may be a source of infection rather than a source of protection.
- Journalists responsible for covering the medical file must strictly follow the safety and preventive measures while visiting health services places, such as reducing these visits. In such cases, we recommend using the protective tools used by the medical care provider, for example; Gloves and masks with proper use, remove and dispose of them safely after leaving the medical facility.

In brief, the following steps can be taken to deal with the masks:

1. Before touching the mask, rub your hands them with alcohol sanitizer or by using soap

and water.

2. Hold the mask and make sure it isn't torn or pierced.
3. Select the top end of the mask (the position of the metal strip).
4. Make sure of that the correct side of the mask is out (the colored side).
5. Place the mask on your face, press the metal tape or the reinforced tip to take your nose shape.
6. Pull the bottom of the mask to cover your mouth and chin.
7. Remove the mask by removing the elastic band from behind the ears, keeping the mask away from your face and clothes to avoid touching the potentially contaminated mask parts.
8. Dispose of the mask immediately by throwing it in a closed waste bin.
9. Clean your hands after touching the mask or throwing it out by rubbing with alcohol disinfectant, or by washing them with soap and water.

Feeling in danger, what can I do?

If you start to feel ill, even with mild symptoms, such as headache, low-grade fever (37.3 ° C or more) and a slight runny nose, isolate yourself at home until you fully recover. And if it takes someone to get the supplies you need, or if you have to go out to buy what you want to eat, for example, wear a mask to avoid transmitting the infection to other people.

If symptoms increased, contact the hotline health providers and seek their advice, and commit to appearing at the health care center.

The Egyptian Ministry of Health has allocated the following numbers to receive communications or to request information about (COVID-19) virus:

105

15335

In the event, God forbid, there is an outbreak of (COVID-19) disease in the country in a way that health service providers are unable to provide medical care for the infected, the World Health Organization (WHO) recommends isolating the infected people at home with a detailed set of instructions that can be found through the following link