

Initial care of persons with acute respiratory illness (ARI) in the context of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in healthcare facilities: assess the risk, isolate, refer.

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(interim recommendations, version 1 – April 12, 2020)

Objective

- To provide recommendations on the initial care of persons with acute respiratory illness (ARI) in the context of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in healthcare facilities based on a decision-making process flowchart.

These recommendations are preliminary and subject to review as new evidence becomes available. * The recommendations provided in this document apply for adults older than 18 years old. Specific audiences, such as infants, children and pregnant women will be addressed on a separate document.

Structure of the flowchart

- The flowchart presented in this document is structure in three steps:
 - Triage** – assessment of the risk of patients arriving at the healthcare facility with acute respiratory illness in the context of COVID-19.
 - Isolation** – implementation of standard and transmission-based precautions for suspected and confirmed cases.
 - Refer** – assessment of the level of respiratory failure and management of complications, referral to higher complexity levels of care.

Key documents

- For each of the steps of the flowchart, it is recommended the following documents to be consulted:

Step	Key document
Triage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Laboratory Guidelines for the Detection and Diagnosis of COVID-19 Virus Infection EMT - Triage drawings and flows and EMT - SARI drawings and flows Technical recommendations for the configuration of a specialized Emergency Medical Team for the treatment of Severe Acute Respiratory Infection (SARI) Requirements and technical specifications of personal protective equipment (PPE) for the novel coronavirus (2019-ncov) in healthcare settings Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) technical guidance: Surveillance and case definitions
Isolation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infection prevention and control during health care when novel coronavirus (nCoV) infection is suspected Rational use of personal protective equipment for coronavirus disease (COVID-19)
Refer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clinical management of severe acute respiratory infection when COVID-19 is suspected Guidelines for Critical Care of Seriously Ill Adult Patients with Coronavirus (COVID-19) in the Americas (Short version)

* Updated information on COVID-19 can be obtained at: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>.

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