



Basic Guidelines for Distancing in Daily Life



May 3, 2020

This document provides the COVID-19 Guidelines of the Republic of Korea for distancing in daily life as of May 3, 2020. Note that it may be modified to suit particular circumstances of each country and community.



Central Disaster and Safety Countermeasure Headquarters

Rules and Guidelines on Distancing in Daily Life

Overview

- ◉ **(Concept)** “Distancing in daily life” refers to a new, sustainable way of life and social interactions that prepares society against the possibility of long-run prevalence of COVID-19. It is designed to achieve thorough infection prevention and containment while sustaining people’s everyday life, economic and social activities.

* In case of a resurgence of coronavirus infections, however, the level of distancing may be adjusted, for instance, to enhanced social distancing.

- ◉ **(Basic principles)** All members of society and communities are called upon to engage in their respective responsibilities to combat the COVID-19 pandemic and safeguard everyone's health and wellbeing. The main goals of individual and collective infection control activities are ▲ to keep at bay the virus infiltration into their living spaces; ▲ to remove the conditions favorable for pathogen transmission and survival; ▲ to minimize the discharge of the virus outside the body; and ▲ to trace and block the transmission path.

- ◉ **(Framework)** Distancing in daily life is composed of two levels: individual and collective.

- The individual distancing in daily life scheme consists of five key rules (with each rule comprising four or five specific actions) and four supplementary rules.
- The collective distancing in daily life for communities and organizations is supported by five key rules and detailed guidelines set out for different types of facilities (drawn by each government ministry in charge).

- ◉ **(Application)** All individuals and communities are obliged to abide by the rules and guidelines for distancing in their daily life. If necessary, they can devise and implement additional guidelines tailored for their own situation or conditions.

[Five Essential Rules (draft)]

- Rule 1: “Stay home for 3 to 4 days if you feel unwell.”
- Rule 2: “Keep a distance of two arms’ length from others.”
- Rule 3: “Wash your hands for 30 seconds. Cough or sneeze into your sleeve.”
- Rule 4: “Ventilate at least twice a day and disinfect regularly.”
- Rule 5: “Stay connected while physically distancing.”

Key Actions in Details (draft)

Rule 1: “Stay home for 3-4 days if you feel unwell.”

Evidence supports that COVID-19 patients at an early stage with mild symptoms can play a role in the transmission of the virus. Everyone can contribute to containing the possible spread of COVID-19 by engaging in maximum social distancing from others when they have a fever or respiratory symptoms.

Action ①: Stay at home and rest for 3-4 days if you have a fever or respiratory symptoms such as cough, phlegm, sore throat, and nasal congestion.

Action ②: If the above-mentioned symptoms appear, try your best to have as little contact with others as possible, and wear a mask when staying with others at home. In particular, refrain from contact (e.g. conversation, having a meal together) with the elderly and those with underlying health conditions.

Action ③: Return to daily life after rest when you are sure to have no more COVID-19 symptoms. If a fever of 38 degrees Celsius or higher continues, or the symptoms deteriorate during rest, contact the KCDC call center (☎1339, ☎area code+120) or a local public health center.

Action ④: If you must leave home to visit a hospital/pharmacy, or to purchase living necessities, make sure to wear a mask.

Action ⑤: Company managers, employers, etc. should encourage employees with COVID-19 symptoms to refrain from work or to return home to rest.

Rule 2: “Keep a distance of two arms’ length from others.”

According to the currently available evidence, COVID-19 is primarily transmitted via respiratory droplets. Maintaining a distance of at least two meters from others can help limit the risk of contamination by droplets (through conversations, coughs, sneezes, etc.), thereby reducing the transmission of coronavirus in communities.

Action ①: Try to stay away from enclosed spaces with poor ventilation or crowded places.

Action ②: Keep a distance of at least two meters (one meter in the inevitable situation) in everyday life.

Action ③: Arrange seats to ensure sufficient distancing between people.

Action ④: For an unavoidable large gathering of the crowd, obtain a space large enough to secure the two-meter distancing, or adjust the time of gatherings so that different meetings don’t overlap.

Action ⑤: Do not shake hands or hug with people.

Rule 3: “Wash your hands for 30 seconds. Cough or sneeze into your sleeve.”

Good personal hygiene is important in preventing the virus from entering your body via contaminated hands. By maintaining proper cough etiquette, you can also minimize the possibility of droplet-based transmission.

Action ①: Wash your hands for at least 30 seconds with running water and soap, or clean them with hand sanitizer before meals, after using a toilet, after returning home from outside, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.

Action ②: Do not touch your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.

Action ③: Ensure that sinks and soaps are available in private and public spaces to facilitate handwashing, or make hand sanitizers easily accessible and always within sight to promote their use.

Action ④: When you cough or sneeze, cover your nose and mouth with a bent elbow or tissue.

Action ⑤: If you have COVID-19 symptoms (such as fever, cough, phlegm, sore throat, nasal congestion) or feel physically unwell, wear a mask for the safety of other people.

Rule 4: “Ventilate at least twice a day and disinfect regularly.”

Ventilation can lower the concentration of coronavirus-containing saliva droplet particles in the air. Also, disinfecting the objects or surfaces on which infectious droplets could have landed is one key method that can curb the possibility of COVID-19 infection via hands.

Action ①: If a space can be ventilated naturally, keep the windows open all the time. If the windows cannot remain open, ventilate the space regularly (at least twice a day). If possible, keep both the door and windows open while ventilating. Indoor ventilation is necessary regardless of exposure to fine particulate matter pollution.

Action ②: Always keep daily spaces (house, office, etc.) clean and disinfect the surfaces of high-touch objects, such as phones, remote controls, handles, doorknobs, tables, armrests, switches, keyboards, computer mice, copiers, at least once a week.

Action ③: In areas frequented by crowds such as public spaces, the surfaces of high-touch objects (elevator buttons, doors, handles, handrails, doorknobs, armrests, switches, etc.) and shared objects (shopping carts, etc.) must be disinfected on a daily basis.

Action ④: When disinfecting, make sure to comply with the instructions of the manufacturer, including the proper amount and safe usage, for each type of disinfectant.

* Examples of disinfectants: disinfectant wipes, alcohol (70% ethanol), sodium hypochlorite (a.k.a. household bleach)

Rule 5: “Stay connected while physically distancing.”

The COVID-19 pandemic cannot be overcome by acting alone; only a strong and unified communal response can tackle the massive challenges posed by the virus. The best winning strategy for all is to work together in the spirits of solidarity, compassion and love for one another.

Action ①: Remember to stay in touch with family and loved ones despite physically being apart.

Action ②: Engage yourself in building up a caring and sharing community. Raise your voice against discrimination and stigmatization toward COVID-19 patients, people in quarantine, and other vulnerable groups .

Action ③: Take actions and share thoughts to support socially vulnerable groups who are particularly susceptible to being left behind in times of the pandemic.

Action ④: When you hear suspicious information, check the source to make sure it is trustworthy. Do not spread rumors or misinformation and refrain from excessive media consumption.

<Practical Guidelines for Distancing in Daily Life: Mask Wearing>**| 1 | General Principles and Proper Ways of Mask Wearing****<General Principles>**

- The use of masks can play a role in preventing and limiting the spread of coronavirus infection via saliva droplets.
- Yet it is worth stressing that the use of a mask alone is insufficient to prevent and reduce transmission of COVID-19, and it must be accompanied by other infection prevention and control measures such as frequent hand washing and physical distancing between people.
- When there is a risk of infection, the high-risk group with underlying health conditions is recommended to wear medical or surgical masks. If medical or surgical masks are unavailable, wearing cloth masks can be helpful as well.

<How to Properly Wear a Mask>

- Select an appropriate-sized mask for your face and attach the mask securely to the face, ensuring that it completely covers your nose and mouth.
- Wash your hands thoroughly before touching the mask to prevent the contamination of the mask itself.
- While wearing the mask, try your best not to touch it with your hands to limit the risk of contamination via hands. If you touch the mask by mistake, clean your hands for at least 30 seconds with soap and water or hand sanitizer.
- After using a mask, remove it without touching its front. In the case of a medical mask, immediately discard the used one in the waste bin (not leaving it unattended) and wash your hands. If it is a cloth mask, wash it frequently according to the proper washing method for each product.
- Take caution not to place a tissue or a towel on the inside of the mask, as it can lead to diminished effectiveness in blocking pathogens due to air leakage or reduced tightness.

- Masks can be re-used only if it is being used temporarily by the same person in a place with a low risk of contamination.

| 2 | When the Use of a Mask is Recommended

It is advised to wear a mask in the following situations:

- Taking care of persons suspicious of COVID-19 infection (Wear a mask rated KF94 or higher.)
- Upon developing respiratory symptoms such as cough, sneeze, phlegm, runny nose, and sore throat
- Visiting a medical institution, pharmacy, or facility for the elderly or disabled
- Working in a profession* that entails working directly with the public

* Examples: those in the service sector who work in physical contact with customers (such as sales assistants, restaurant workers, and customer service representatives), public transportation operators, train station workers, mail carriers, couriers, janitors of large buildings

- When those in high-risk groups* or with underlying health conditions** come into contact with others within two meters in a poorly ventilated space (e.g. mass gatherings, traveling by public transportation, etc.)

* Examples of high-risk groups: the elderly, children, pregnant women, patients with chronic diseases, etc.

** Examples of underlying health conditions: chronic lung disease, diabetes, chronic renal disease, chronic liver disease, chronic cardiovascular disease, blood cancer, cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy, or patients taking immune checkpoint inhibitors

- Using an indoor multi-purpose facility (e.g. libraries, museums, sports facilities, movie theaters, shopping malls, or public transportation)
- Being outdoors where two-meter distancing cannot be ensured

| 3 | When the Use of a Mask is Not Recommended

- When you are outdoors where proper distancing can be ensured, or when you spend time alone without meeting anyone, the use of a mask is not advised.
- Children aged under 24 months, as well as those who are unable to remove the mask by themselves without help from others or have difficulties in breathing when wearing a mask, should not wear a mask.

<Practical Guidelines for Distancing in Daily Life: Environmental Disinfection>

| 1 | General Principles

- Disinfection performed in accordance with proper methods and recommended procedures can ensure effective and safe removal of pathogens.
- During disinfecting, make sure to ventilate by keeping windows open.
- Staff who conduct cleaning or disinfection should wear proper personal protective equipment (PPE) such as disposable gloves, masks, and, if necessary, disposable waterproof long-sleeved gowns (or waterproof aprons), and goggles (or face shields).
- A proper disinfectant* approved by or reported to the Ministry of Environment (MOE) must be used. Make sure to comply with the specified instructions and recommendations set by the manufacturer since excessive or improper use of disinfectants may cause hazard to the human body.

* Examples: disinfectant wipes, alcohol (70% ethanol), diluted sodium hypochlorite (a.k.a. household bleach) and other equivalent products

- When using sodium hypochlorite, prepare the solution (500 to 1,000 ppm) by diluting it just before disinfection work. Rub the target area with a cloth sufficiently wet with the prepared solution, leave it for 10 minutes at least, and then wipe it with a cloth dampened with clean water.
 - To make a 500 ppm solution, pour 5 ml of sodium hypochlorite into an empty 500 ml PET bottle (well-cleaned and dried), fill the rest of the bottle with cold water, and mix it well.
 - To make a 1,000 ppm solution, pour 10 ml of sodium hypochlorite into an empty 500 ml PET bottle (well-cleaned and dried), fill up the bottle with cold water and mix it well.
- Use a cloth sufficiently wet with disinfectant, or a disinfectant wipe.
 - Caution must be exercised when using the method of spraying the disinfectant into air. It causes the risk of inhalation of infectious aerosols, creating danger to the human body. Also, the sprayed area must be wiped because the effect of disinfection may otherwise remain uneven due to the unclear scope of contact between the disinfectant and applied surfaces.
- After disinfection, remove the used gloves and wash your hands with soap and water.

| 2 | Disinfect everyday spaces such as home and offices according to the following guidance.

- ◉ Disinfect the spaces at least once a week, with a particular attention to the surfaces of high-touch objects such as phones, remote controls, doorknobs, handles, tables, armrests, switches, keyboards, computer mice, and copiers.
- ◉ In the case of children's toys, wipe them with a clean cloth after disinfection to remove any remnants of the cleaning solution.

| 3 | Areas frequented by many people (such as public places) should be disinfected according to the following guidance.

- ◉ It is particularly important to thoroughly disinfect the surfaces of high-touch objects including doorknobs, handrails, handles, armrests, and switches.
 - ◉ Clean and disinfect areas with unspecified high contact such as the entrance doors of a building, elevator buttons at least once a day.
 - ◉ Facility managers should provide cleaning and disinfecting staff with sufficient quantities of equipment for cleaning, disinfection, and personal protection (disinfectants, paper towels, masks, etc.)
- ※ For more detailed information on disinfection, please refer to "Disinfection Guidelines to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19 at Public Facilities and Multi-purpose Facilities" (Edition 3-1).

Guidelines for Distancing in Daily Life: The Elderly and High-risk Groups**| 1 | General Action**

- ◉ Older people aged 65 and above, as well as particular high-risk groups, must take extra caution to stay healthy because they are more susceptible to infections due to weakened immune systems and are highly likely to develop severe illnesses or critical conditions.
 - As of April 30, 2020, Korea's elderly aged 70 or older accounted for more than 60% of severe or critically-ill COVID-19 patients, and about two out of ten people who are 80 years of age or older died from COVID-19, with the fatality rate for this age group standing at 24.33%.
- ◉ A family member, relative, or caregiver who has respiratory symptoms or feels unwell should avoid visiting the elderly and persons in high-risk groups.
- ◉ It is important that people with chronic conditions remember to take prescribed medicines in their usual daily routines and follow their medical appointment schedule.
 - Abruptly stopping the prescribed medication may aggravate symptoms. To ensure uninterrupted treatment, it is recommended to secure extra medication after consulting with your physician.
- ◉ Older adults (age 65 and over) shall complete necessary vaccinations including pneumococcal vaccines.

※ Examples of High-Risk Groups

- People with chronic underlying medical problems, such as diabetes, chronic kidney disease, chronic liver disease, chronic lung disease, chronic cardiovascular disease, blood cancer, patients on cancer treatment, patients taking immunosuppressant drugs, and HIV patients
- Those under special circumstances that require particular attention (e.g. individuals with morbid obesity, pregnant women, patients undergoing dialysis, organ transplantation recipients, or smokers.)
- Inpatients who require initial oxygen treatment due to the oxygen saturation (SP02) of below 90 in the indoor air

| 2 | Specific guidance ①: Stay at home.

- ◉ Avoid outings to the fullest possible extent, except for grocery shopping and visits to medical institutions or pharmacies. Be careful not to have unnecessary gatherings or travels.
- ◉ Refrain from inviting others to your home or visiting others at their homes.
- ◉ Follow a brief daily home exercise routine to maintain good health. Stay away from alcohol and smoking.

| 3 | Specific guidance ②: If you are sick, contact your local public health center and visit a screening station.

- ◉ When a high fever of 38 degrees Celsius or higher persists or respiratory symptoms (cough, sore throat, runny nose, etc.) deteriorate, 1) contact the KCDC call center (1339 or area code+120) or a public health center, or 2) visit a screening station for treatment.
- ◉ When visiting a medical institution, make sure to wear a mask. Use your own vehicle if possible.
 - People who are unable to remove a mask on their own without assistance or those who have trouble breathing in the face mask are advised not to wear a mask.

| 4 | Specific guidance ③: If you must go outside, observe the following advice.

- ◉ Avoid going to crowded places, especially enclosed and poorly-ventilated areas. If it is an unavoidable visit, you must wear a mask.
- ◉ Maintain a healthy distance of two meters from other people. In particular, pay a special attention not to have close contact with people who are sick.
- ◉ Shun physical contact such as handshakes and hugs.
- ◉ Do not share food, drinks, or utensils with other people and use your own cutlery, towels, etc.

| 5 | Specific guidance ④: If you are struggling with stress, the following tips can help you.

- ◉ Limit the amount of time you spend reading or watching news about COVID-19. Seek news updates at specific times during the day. Constant streams of news reports about the pandemic can cause you to feel anxious or distressed.

- Gather information only from trusted sources. Upon encountering suspicious information, check its source to see whether it is trustworthy. Do not share rumors or misinformation.
- Take good care of your health.
 - Take time to engage in deep breaths, body stretching, and meditation.
 - Maintain a healthy and balanced diet, regular exercise, and sufficient sleep.
- Communicate frequently with family members and friends.
 - Talk to people you trust about your concerns and feelings over the phone or video calls.

Guidelines for Distancing in Daily Life: Healthy Lifestyle

| 1 | Perform regular exercise.

- Regular physical activities play an important role in the prevention and reduction of various diseases as well as in promotion of health and fitness.
 - It is recommended to limit sedentary leisure time spent sitting, leaning, and lying down (doing a computer or smartphone, watching television, etc.) to less than two hours a day.
- Even amid the times of the epidemic outbreak, physical activity and exercise are crucial elements for maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Learn daily physical exercise to perform at home, such as watching and following home workout demonstrations.
- Greater intensity of physical activities can cause increased secretion of saliva droplets, so make sure to ventilate indoors sufficiently after each round of physical exercise.
- When you have difficulty engaging in regular physical exercise due to old age or illness, seek the type of physical activity suitable for your conditions and stay active.
 - Avoid excessive physical activity or sudden body movements, which can have disadvantageous effects on your body if it continues for an extended period of time.

| 2 | Get regular health check-ups.

- If you need consistent healthcare and medications due to high blood pressure, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, etc., consult your doctor and maintain your treatment.
- In case of an emergency or other situations with pressing needs, go to visit a medical institution.
- Regular healthcare practices like timely immunizations and regular check-ups can help prevent, reduce, or manage diseases.

| 3 | Maintain a balanced diet.

- Maintaining good nutrition by practicing a healthy diet in daily life can enhance your immune system to boost resistance to diseases and make you stay healthy.

- Eat a varied, well-balanced diet prepared using healthy recipes, and drink plenty of water.
- Do not skip breakfast, and reduce your salt, sugar, and oil intake in your diet.

| 4 | Manage your psychological well-being during times of stress and crisis.

- Feeling pressure and distress in the face of an epidemic outbreak is a normal experience for everyone. Turn to your family, friends, colleagues, or other trusted persons to communicate and share your experiences, which can help you de-stress and overcome anxiety.
- Stay informed from reliable sources only. Incorrect information may compound stress and impair proper judgment.
- Difficult emotions like anger and sadness are normal responses that anyone can experience, but in excessive cases, you may need to seek assistance from specialists.

* For general public and quarantined individuals, contact the Mental Health and Welfare Center, ☎ 1577-0199. For those who have COVID-19 as well as their families, contact the National Trauma Center, ☎ 02-2204-0001(or 0002).

- Rule 1: “Work together to protect your community.”
- Rule 2: “Designate a quarantine manager for effective response.”
- Rule 3: “Respect your community's quarantine guidelines.”
- Rule 4: “The quarantine manager will do the best to protect the community.”
- Rule 5: “The leader and members of the community will provide full support for the quarantine manager.”

Key Actions in Details (draft)

Rule 1: “Work together to protect your community.”

Action ①: It has been widely recognized that COVID-19 can be transmitted even in the early stages with mild symptoms and is characterized by rapid transmission, which raises the risk of community outbreaks. Preventing community transmissions of COVID-19 requires collective efforts on the part of the community/organization as well as individual efforts.

Action ②: For effective prevention and early containment of the coronavirus, the community leader should establish in advance an efficient and well-organized response system which is based on the consensus and cooperation of community members.

Action ③: The importance of collective efforts to combat the COVID-19 pandemic is relevant for all types of communities, from business communities to non-profit ones such as religious groups and recreational clubs.

Rule 2: “Designate a quarantine manager for effective response.”

Action ①: Each community should designate a “quarantine manager” who is responsible for supervising the community’s infectious disease prevention and control activities.

Action ②: The quarantine manager can be an individual or a team of an appropriate number of people, depending on the size of the community.

Action ③: The quarantine manager serves to protect the community from the spread of COVID-19 and assumes responsibility in the performance of major infectious disease prevention and control activities.

Action ④: The community members should actively heed the requests of the quarantine manager for effective and efficient infection prevention and control.

Rule 3: “Respect your community's quarantine guidelines.”

Action ①: The quarantine manager should conduct a risk assessment that takes into consideration physical density, degree of ventilation and other various risk factors, and establish the guidelines for quarantine based on the evaluation.

Action ②: The quarantine guidelines should be prepared by reference to relevant chapters from “Supplementary Guidelines for Collective Quarantine (Detailed Guidelines).” Also, they must incorporate five key rules for individual infection control (Appendix 1-1) and four supplementary rules for individuals (Appendix 1-2).

Action ③: Communities with an environment of mass contact or high level of enclosure should reinforce in their guidelines rules regarding the practices of frequent handwashing, social distancing of 1-2 meters, wearing a mask (or a face-shield), symptom monitoring, and sufficient ventilation.

Action ④: The quarantine manager will hold a regular training for the community and provide assistance for all members in practicing the quarantine guidelines and taking necessary actions.

Action ⑤: When a group's infection-related activities are conducted in the absence of a quarantine manager, another member should support members in carrying out the quarantine guidelines on behalf of the quarantine manager.

Action ⑥: The quarantine manager should monitor the allocation of roles among community members and the management of facility environments for effective implementation of the quarantine guidelines and make a request to the community if any room for improvement is identified.

Rule 4: “The quarantine manager will do the best to protect the community.”

Action ①: The quarantine manager should secure a network of emergency contacts with local public health center personnel and build in advance the cooperative partnership required for quarantine activities.

Action ②: The quarantine manager should oversee healthcare of community members, including monitoring their respiratory symptoms and body temperatures on a daily or per-activity basis. In doing so, it is recommended to collect and maintain a daily ledger that records respiratory symptoms per member.

Action ③: Members who have a fever or respiratory symptoms must be immediately sent home and arranged to have rest at home for 3-4 days. If the person is a member of high-risk groups or a senior aged 65 and over, he/she should be guided to a screening station to undergo a COVID-19 test.

Action ④: In the case where more than two cases of relevant symptoms occur within 3 to 4 days in a specific area of the community where close contact takes place (such as the same division at work or the same class at school), the manager should direct the symptomatic persons to undergo COVID-19 tests. In case of the occurrence of additional suspected cases, the manager should report the possible outbreak of a collective infection to the local public health center.

Rule 5: “The leader and members of the community will provide full support for the quarantine manager.”

Action ①: The community leader should support the activities of the quarantine manager and cooperate upon the manager's requests to reassign responsibilities, improve the environment, etc. as required for compliance with the quarantine guidelines.

Action ②: The leader and each community member should follow the quarantine guidelines for the safety of the whole community and actively cooperate with the requests of the quarantine manager.

Action ③: The community leader should hold evaluation meetings to assess the community's quarantine management efforts and discuss any possible improvement on a monthly basis at least.