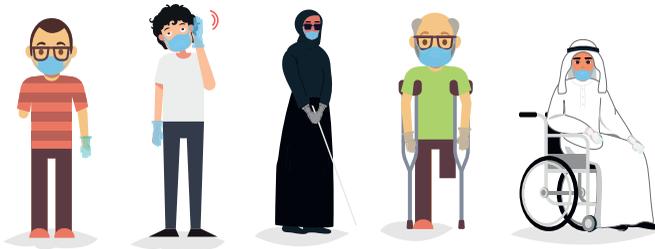




# CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19)



## HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDANCE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES



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## Who is this guidance for?

This guidance is for the people living with disabilities in Qatar; these include various physical and mental impairments that can hamper or reduce their ability to carry out their day-to-day activities as well as adopting COVID-19 safety measures.

## What is Coronavirus disease (Covid-19)?

COVID-19 is a highly contagious disease with symptoms including fever, cough and shortness of breath.

## How do people get infected?

Coronavirus is transmitted, like any other viruses that attack the respiratory system, from one infected person to another in the droplets when they sneeze, cough or speak especially if at a distance of less than two meters. It can also be transmitted through close contact with the infected person or touching surfaces.

## Are people with disabilities at higher risk from Covid-19?

**People with disability may be at greater risk of contracting COVID-19 due to:**



Barriers to implementing basic hygiene measures, such as hand-washing (e.g. handbasins, sinks or water pumps may be physically inaccessible, or a person may have physical difficulty rubbing their hands together thoroughly);



Difficulty in enacting social distancing because of additional support needs or because they are institutionalized;



The need to touch things to obtain information from the environment or for physical support;



Barriers to accessing public health information.

**People with disability may be at greater risk of developing more severe cases of COVID-19 if they become infected.**

**This may be because of:**



COVID-19 exacerbating existing health conditions, particularly those related to respiratory function, immune system function, heart disease or diabetes;



Barriers to accessing health care.

People with disability may be more affected by the outbreak because of serious disruptions to the services they rely on due to safety precautions such as lockdown guidelines - so it is important to be aware, be prepared and act safely.

## **Actions for people with disability and their household**

People living with a disability and their household should follow the advice from reputable expert sources during the COVID-19 outbreak:

Qatar's Ministry of Public Health: <https://www.moph.gov.qa/>

World Health Organization: WHO guidance on basic protection measures

If you have any difficulty following the basic protection measures (for example, you are not able to access a hand basin/sink/water pump to wash your hands regularly), work with your family, friends and caregivers to identify adaptations.

## The most important safety measure is to reduce your potential exposure to COVID-19

### Other measures include:



Avoid crowded places and minimize physical contact with other people. Consider making necessary visits outside of peak time periods.



Make purchases online or over the telephone or request assistance from family, friends, or caregivers to avoid needing to access crowded environments.



Consider gathering urgent items you need such as food, cleaning supplies, medication or medical supplies to reduce the frequency with which you or people living in your household need to access public places.



Work from home if possible, especially if you typically work in a busy or crowded environment.



Ensure that assistive products, if used, are disinfected frequently; these include wheelchairs, walking canes, walkers, transfer boards, white canes, or any other product that is frequently handled and used in public spaces.

### Put a plan in place to ensure continuation of the care and support you need

- If you rely on caregivers, consider increasing the group of those you can call upon, in case one or more becoming unwell or need to self-isolate.
- If you organize caregivers through an agency, find out what contingency measures they have in place to compensate for a

potential workforce shortage and what safety measures they apply in monitoring the health of their workforce. You may want to talk to family and friends about what additional support they can provide if needed.

- Identify relevant organizations in your community that you can access if you need help.

## What should you do if you or someone in your household contracts COVID-19



Make sure those in your household, including the friends and family you trust, know of any important information they would need should you become unwell. This may include information about your health insurance, your medication, and the care needs of any of your dependents (children, elderly parents or pets).



Should you contract COVID-19 or require assistance, make sure everybody in your household or carers know to call the COVID-19 helpline number # 16000



If anyone in the household shows flu-like symptoms, they should be isolated, instructed to wear a mask, and must access testing as soon as possible. Call the COVID-19 helpline for advice.



All surfaces need to be disinfected, and everyone in the household monitored for symptoms. If possible, anyone with an underlying health condition or reduced immunity should be moved to a separate location until the completion of isolation periods.

## How else can you protect your health and wellbeing during this pandemic?

### Tips for people living with a disability:



Continue to take your medication and follow medical advice



Secure a one-month supply of your medication or longer if possible



Keep a distance of at least 2 meters from people with a cough, cold or flu



Wash your hands often with soap and water



Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands



Keep all frequently touched surfaces clean with disinfectant



Safeguard your **mental health and wellbeing**.

Physical distance does not mean social isolation; continue connecting with other family and friends using telephone calls, texts or social media. Keep mentally active with playing games, reading, learning a new skill or any other activity that is relaxing and reassurance.



Maintaining a **healthy lifestyle** will make all bodily functions work better and help strengthen your body's natural immunity. Eating healthy diets, with plenty of fruit and vegetables, keeping physically active, not smoking, and getting enough sleep are key components of a healthy lifestyle.

For more info. on coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)  
Call: 16000, or visit: [www.moph.gov.qa](http://www.moph.gov.qa)