"Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)" is the disease caused by a new coronavirus called SARS-CoV-2.

**Causative agent**

The most common symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, dry cough and fatigue. Other symptoms include loss of taste or smell, nasal congestion, conjunctivitis, sore throat, headache, muscle or joint pain, skin rash, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, chills or dizziness. Some people may only have very mild or non-specific symptoms, while some may develop severe symptoms like shortness of breath, chest pain or confusion. Complications may include respiratory failure, acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS), sepsis and septic shock, thromboembolism, and/or multi-organ failure including injury of the heart, liver or kidneys. People of older age and those with underlying medical problems (e.g. hypertension, heart and lung problems, diabetes, obesity or cancer) are at higher risk of developing serious illness. Some people who have had COVID-19 may continue to experience symptoms, including fatigue, respiratory and neurological symptoms. At the moment, it is still unclear how long the symptoms may last.

**Clinical features**

The main mode of transmission is through respiratory droplets, the virus can also be transmitted through contact. Most estimates of the incubation period range from 1 to 14 days, most commonly around 5 days.

**Mode of transmission and incubation period**

The main treatment is supportive.

**Prevention**

**COVID-19 vaccination**

- COVID-19 vaccines are effective to protect people from developing COVID-19 disease.
- Vaccination is one of the tools in the overall public health response to COVID-19. The combination of non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) with vaccination will allow for maximum protection against the virus.
- With COVID-19 vaccines deployed, there is a need to continue NPIs, including social distancing, good hand hygiene and wearing a mask in public, to reduce the risk of virus transmission. NPIs should continue to be followed by vaccinated individuals, as well as those who have not yet been vaccinated.
- For details on COVID-19 vaccination, please refer to thematic website for COVID-19 Vaccination Programme: www.covidvaccine.gov.hk

**Health advice**

Members of the public are urged to go out less and reduce social activities such as meals gatherings or other gatherings, and maintain appropriate social distance with other people as far as possible. To maintain at all times strict personal and environmental hygiene is key to personal protection against infection and prevention of the spread of the disease in the community:

- Surgical mask can prevent transmission of respiratory viruses from ill persons. It is essential for persons who are symptomatic (even if having mild symptoms) to wear a surgical mask;
- Wear a surgical mask when taking public transport or staying in crowded places. It is important to wear a mask properly, including hand hygiene before wearing and after removing a mask;
- Avoid touching your eyes, mouth and nose;
- Perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching one’s mouth, nose or eyes; before eating; after using the toilet; after touching public installations such as handrails or door knobs; or when hands are contaminated by respiratory secretions after coughing or sneezing;
- Cover your mouth and nose with tissue paper when sneezing or coughing. Dispose of soiled tissues into a lidded rubbish bin, then wash hands thoroughly;
- Wash hands with liquid soap and water, and rub for at least 20 seconds. Then rinse with water and dry with a disposable paper towel. When the hands are cleaned, do not touch the water tap directly again (for example, using a paper towel to wrap the faucet before turn it off). If hand washing facilities are not available, or when hands are not visibly soiled, performing hand hygiene with 70 to 80% alcohol-based handrub is an effective alternative;
- Maintain drainage pipes properly and regularly (about once a week) pour about half a litre of water into each drain outlet (U-traps) to ensure environmental hygiene;
- After using the toilet, put the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs; and
- When having respiratory symptoms, wear a surgical mask, refrain from work or attending class at school, avoid going to crowded places and seek medical advice promptly.

Remark: Face mask is not recommended for children under the age of 2 years without supervision.

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**Vaccination**

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**Management**

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