

**SUGGESTIONS TO PREVENT INFECTION AND REMAIN HEALTHY  
DURING THE SECOND WAVE OF CORONA VIRUS (COVID-19) PANDEMIC**



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Corona's second wave is on the rise. No beds are available in the hospital, people are desperately running around to procure Remdesivir, there is a shortage of oxygen, not only in the laboratories but the crematorium too has a waiting line for the final rituals. In such a situation, a simple fever can make people suspicious of contracting Corona. It is natural to be afraid, but fear makes the symptoms of the disease worse.

It is undisputed that the virus is spreading. It is a known fact in Ayurveda that during the *Vasant Rutu* (spring season) the Kapha dosha intensifies. As the Kapha melts, it creates mucus. This gives a fertile environment for viruses and bacteria to thrive. This is a contributing factor for the increase in the number of cases of Corona.

What medicine works against the Coronavirus? Should antibiotics be taken or not? When should one get admitted in the hospital? What care can be taken at home? What is the kind of food that could be consumed? What food needs to be avoided? There is much such confusion.

It has been a constant endeavor at Nisargopachar Kendra to provide health care solutions with integration of both modern and traditional medicine and with holistic approach. We have prepared this document to suggest how to take care of our body and mind with such an integrated approach in the current scenario. This document is enriched with the knowledge and experience of a few Ayurvedic doctors, including Vd. Madanmohanbhai Patel; Dr. Minoobhai Parabia, a renowned expert from the field of Medicinal Plants and Dr. B. M. Palan from Samatvam, an expert in the field of Mind-Body Medicine, apart from our own experience in the field of holistic health. Last year, we had come up with a similar document. This is an updated version based on the latest understanding of the subject from modern medicine perspective, in addition to the understanding based on Ayurveda. We hope this write-up will be useful to the readers.

This write-up is prepared with the objective to help people take care of their own health. Please note that this article is not a substitute to the advice given by a doctor. The reader is advised to consult his / her doctor in case of any disease or ill-health related condition. It is also advisable that one consults an expert for his / her long term diet plan.

April 29, 2021

Dr. Bharat Shah

## Suggestions for Preventing Infection of COVID-19

### (I) Preventing the spread of virus infection:

Corona virus is an airborne infection hence the following can be taken into consideration to control the spread of the virus.

- Wear a good quality mask that fits well.
- Keep at least one meter distance from any person. However, two meter distance is preferable.
- Avoid going to gatherings.
- While coughing or sneezing, cover your mouth and nose by a slightly bent elbow or a tissue paper or a handkerchief. Make sure you dispose of the tissue paper in the trash bin.
- Do not touch your nose, eyes or mouth without washing hands.

### (II) Diet in Spring Season (Vasant Ritu):

As the Kapha dosha intensifies during the spring season it is best to avoid food that produces phlegm in the body. Modification in the diet (*Ahar*) and daily routine (*Vihar*) according to the season helps prevent commonly occurring diseases in a particular season.

- Avoid food that is heavy to digest for e.g. very oily, fried, desserts and non-vegetarian food.
- Strictly avoid cold water, cold drinks and cold food.
- Avoid milk, yogurt, butter and cheese. If it is required to take milk, then dilute it with a concoction made with holy basil, turmeric, ginger or dried ginger powder and water.
- Use of grains like Bajra, Ragi, Jovar (Sorghum), Maize, Barley, Kodo millet (Kodra) and popped sorghum is beneficial. As the weather is getting hot nowadays, it is advisable to take Rice, a mix of Barley and Wheat.
- Intake of Pomegranate, Apple, Ripe Papaya, Ripe Mango, Mosambi, Amla (Indian Gooseberry), Black Raisin, Dates are helpful.
- Bittergourd, Pointed Gourd (*Parval*), Bottle Gourd (*Dudhi*), Pumpkin (*Kodhu*), Snake Gourd (*Turiya*), Moringa /Drum Sticks (*Sargavo*) are good in vegetables.
- Garlic, Onions, Long Pepper, Carom seeds (*Ajwain*), Dried Ginger Powder, , Ginger and Turmeric are used to reduce the Kapha Dosha. Dried Coriander seed powder is also found useful. As the weather is getting hot nowadays, restrict the use *garam masala* or black pepper.

- Diet with Bitter, Pungent and Astringent *Rasas* and the one with *Laghu*, *Ushna* and *Ruksha* properties are useful. For the list of foods that are easy and difficult to digest please see Appendix-3.
- For drinking purpose, add dried ginger powder to water and boil it. As the weather is hot during summers, use 1 to 1.5 spoonful of dried ginger powder according to the Prakruti of a person and 1 spoonful of dried coriander powder and add it to the quantity of water for daily requirement of a person and boil it. Such medicated water can be used for drinking throughout the day.
- Avoid sleeping in the noon.

### **(III) Suggestions to enhance Immunity:**

To enhance immunity, one needs to pay attention to a holistic lifestyle involving diet (*Ahar*), daily routine & exercise (*Vihar*) and mind (*Manovyapar*).

#### **Diet (Ahar):**

1. Have a balanced diet consisting required nutrients including moderate consumption of fruits and vegetables rich in Vitamin A, Vitamin C, Flavonoids, and other antioxidants. Fruits like Papaya, Pomegranate, Ripe Mango, Chikoo, Sweet Lime (Mosambi) and Amla (Indian Gooseberry) are considered better in this season.
2. Do not over-eat. Do not eat more than your appetite and in excess of digestive capacity.
3. Avoid eating frequently. Taking food more than 3 or 4 times a day may weaken the digestive fire.
4. Have an easy to digest meal. Avoid fried foods, sweets, eggs, and meat. (Detailed information about food items easy or difficult to digest is given in Appendix – 3)
5. Be regular with your mealtimes. Take dinner before sunset.
6. Avoid outside food.
7. Avoid ice-creams, cold-drinks, refrigerated water, curd, cold or stale food, food items made of refined wheat flour, fried food, bakery items, packed or junk food.
8. Eating home cooked, fresh, warm, and easy to digest food helps to maintain immunity to fight disease.

### **Daily Routine & Exercise (Vihar):**

1. Take adequate rest and sleep.
2. Do not stay awake late in the night. Do not take an afternoon sleep, especially after lunch.
3. Exercise regularly.
4. Avoid chewing tobacco, smoking or consuming alcohol.
5. Breathe deeply for 3-4 minutes twice a day. Kapalbhati and Pranayama can also be done, if one has been trained for the same.
6. Ensure adequate ventilation and sunlight in the house.
7. Allow your body to get exposed to sunrays for a few minutes in the morning. Take sunbath.
8. Put two drops of Sesame oil or ghee in both the nostrils (*nasya*) and also apply with little finger.

### **Mental Health (Manovyapar):**

It is proved beyond doubt that our thoughts and emotions have profound impact on our body. Psychological stress and negative emotions like fear and insecurity have negative impact on body and immune system. It is natural that a fast spreading pandemic like COVID-19 may cause mental and emotional stress.

### **Symptoms of Mental and Emotional Stress:**

1. Anxiety, fear and feeling of numbness.
2. Anger or short-temperedness.
3. Loss of appetite.
4. Difficulty in sleeping, less quantity of sleep, nightmares.
5. Difficulty in keeping concentration.
6. Lethargy or changes in energy level.
7. Digestive disorders.
8. Physical reactions, such as headaches or body pains.
9. Worsening of chronic health problems, eg. Hypertension or Diabetes.

## **What can be done to manage Stress?**

1. Eat healthy & balanced diet, exercise regularly, take adequate sleep.
2. Connect with others. Share your concerns and how you are feeling with your family members or friends.
3. Connect with friends and relatives who have a cheerful and positive attitude. Talk to them over a phone call to maintain positivity.
4. Avoid watching news of Covid pandemic.
5. Engage with activities you like to do, stay occupied with the things that gives you joy and happiness.
6. Practice deep breathing.
7. Practice Yogasana and Pranayama.
8. Practice regularly, any one of the relaxation techniques, like Shavasana, Yoga-nidra, Breath-watching, Progressive Muscular Relaxation and Meditation.
9. Use positive auto-suggestions to strengthen immunity. Dr. B. M. Palan has prepared a guided auto-suggestion on “Body-Mind Relaxation for Strengthening Immunity”, which prepares body and mind to receive positive and empowering thoughts in a state of relaxation. Please refer Appendix-1 for the details.
10. Pray regularly and have unwavering faith in God. Pray for well-being, peace, harmony and happiness of humans and all the living beings of the universe.

## **Yoga Pranayam:**

Daily practice of yoga plays a vital role in maintaining the immunity. Omkar, Sukshma Kriya, Deep Breathing, exercises that increases lung capacity (taking deep breaths while raising both hands, taking deep breaths while spreading hands on the sideways) or Asanas (such as Tadasana, Gaumukhasana, Ardh-Ushtrasana, Ardh-Chakrasana, Bhujangasana, Vakrasana and Setubandh asana), Pranayama (Kapalbhati, Anulom-Vilom, Brahmari) and Shavasana. An Integrated Yoga Program comprising all the practices mentioned above can be very effective.

## **HERBAL DECOCTIONS**

Any one of the following decoctions can be used. It is used to strengthen body immunity and treat cold and fever. One should not have a misconception that this is used for the treatment of Coronavirus. One can continue using these decoctions during cough, cold and fever after consulting the doctor. One should take the doctor's advice before starting the concoctions, if one is already suffering from a health condition or taking some medicines for the same. Studies show that Giloy (*Gado*) is helpful to balance immunity. One can use anyone of the decoctions, from the list below, in combination with Giloy decoction or Giloy Powder (1-3 gm twice a day) or Samshamni Vati (500 mg twice a day). Usually these decoctions are recommended for a month. One should consult an Ayurvedic or relevant health professional for the duration.

### **1. Arogya-Rakshak Kadha (Decoction for Health Protection):**

Some of the herbs used in this decoction have anti-viral, immuno-enhancing and bio-availability enhancing properties. Please refer Appendix – 2 for the detailed recipe.

### **2. Pathyaadi Kvaathah:**

Mix equal quantities of Hardey, Giloy, Amla (Indian Gooseberry), Bark of Neem Tree and Turmeric. Take 10 gm of coarse powdered mixture and add it to 200 ml of water. Boil the water till you are left with 50 ml of the decoction. Strain it and consume it while it is lukewarm. This could be consumed once or twice a day in the morning on an empty stomach and in the evening before dinner.

### **3. Dried Ginger powder, Holy Basil, Black Pepper and Black Raisins Decoction:**

This decoction can be used if it is difficult to procure herbs used in *Aarogya Rakshak Kadha*. Herbs used in this decoction are generally used in Indian kitchen. Boil some water with Dried Ginger Powder, Holy Basil, Black Pepper Powder and a few Black Raisins. For taste one can add Jaggery and few Lemon drops. You can take this decoction 2-3 times in a day.

## What can be done if one experiences Fever, Cough or Difficulty in breathing?

Most patients with coronavirus infection do not develop severe symptoms. Also, in last one year, medical science has much clarity on how to manage and treat this condition. It is better not to panic as all fevers, coughs or colds may not be COVID infection. At the same time, one should not be negligent too. Carelessness can lead to severe consequences. Hence, it is important to be vigilant. Generally we find following symptoms in COVID infection in the second wave of the pandemic:

- Fever
- Cough and cold
- Weakness and fatigue
- Headache or heaviness in the head
- Body ache
- Diarrhea or vomiting
- Total or partial loss of taste and smell

If one is suffering from any one or more symptoms from the above list, it is better to get tested for COVID. We do not have any medicine that can effectively treat Coronavirus infection. Usually antibiotics like Azithromycin or Doxycycline or medicines like Hydroxychloroquine are given. Scientific studies show that these medicines are not effective for COVID. Effectiveness of Favipiravir or Ivermectin is also questionable. There is no proof that Remdesivir can effectively kill Coronavirus. Hence, Remdesivir is used only in selected cases in advance stages of the disease. In short, there is no medicine effective for mild stage of Corona virus infection. In this situation, it is better that we focus on diet, lifestyle, and herbal medicines for treatment of mild disease.

Normally it is appropriate for any disease to be treated by a qualified doctor, but in the existing situation, one can use the following advice while waiting for the expert's consultation. Please note that these suggestions are not a substitute for expert advice. In specific cases, it is important to consult a doctor and take treatments accordingly.



## 1. Diet and Lifestyle:

1. Ayurveda emphasizes on fasting during fever to eliminate toxins. However, modern science does not recommend fasting in current circumstances. Keeping both these schools of thought in mind, intake of easy digestible food is recommended.
2. Rice water (boiled), Moong water, Popcorn (Jowar), Puffed Rice, Roasted Dahlia, Black Raisins, Pomegranate, Papaya are considered useful.
3. If the patient feels hungry, easily digestible meals can be given. Vegetable Khichdi, Millet Khichdi, Rice and boiled Green gram etc. can be taken. (For more details about food items that are easy or difficult to digest, refer appendix 3)
4. Use boiled water with Ginger and Coriander Powder for drinking throughout the day. Always drink lukewarm water.
5. Rest and good sleep is extremely important during the sickness.
6. Take steam Inhalation, One can add Carom Seeds (*Ajwain*) or Eucalyptus Oil for the same.
7. Gargle using warm water with Salt and Turmeric powder.

## 2. Herbal Decoctions:

1. Herbal Decoction (as mentioned in Appendix 2) twice in a day or Maha Sudarshan powder (1-3 gm thrice a day) or Sudarshan Ghanvati (500 mg thrice a day) can be useful.
2. Giloy decoction or Samshamni Vati (500mg thrice a day) can be useful.

## 3. Vitamin supplements:

Vitamin C, Vitamin D and Zinc supplements can be taken as per the doctor's advice.

## 4. Emotional and Mental Wellbeing:

One should take steps to manage stress as mentioned in page no. 6.

## 5. Yoga Pranayam:

In the initial stages of the sickness, if the patient is able to practice Yoga & Pranayama, regular practice of the same will help in maintaining mental wellbeing as well as recovering from the illness. Omkar, Sukshmakriya, Deep Breathing, Simple Yogasana, Shavasan and Auto suggestions for boosting immunity can play an important role in the recovery.

## 6. Care to prevent spread of infection to others:

1. Immediately isolate yourself from family members and other environments.
2. Always wear a mask in case you come in close contact with any family members or other people.
3. Keep the vessels, clothes and bedding separate for the infected person.
4. Wash properly or sanitize the things frequently touched by the patient.

## 7. High Risk Signs and Symptoms:

Patients need to check their body temperature and SpO<sub>2</sub> levels with a pulse oximeter every 6 hours. If the patient has adequate energy, he/she should walk for 6 minutes and then take SpO<sub>2</sub> reading. It is important to make sure that the nail bed of the finger covers the sensor in the oximeter to get accurate readings.

Immediately consult a doctor in case of specific problem or any of the following symptoms are observed:

- The patient is elderly or
- If the patient has pre-existing conditions like Diabetes, Heart Disease, Renal Failure, Cancer or is taking medication that can lower the immunity.
- If fever persists for more than 5 days.
- If there is high grade fever (more than 101° F with medication or 103° F without medication).
- If fever appears with rigors or shivering.
- Relapse of fever 5 days after it disappeared (biphasic fever).
- Extreme weakness.
- Persistent severe Cough.

The patient should get admitted to the hospital immediately, if any of the following symptoms appear.

- Respiratory rate (rate of breathing) remains high (more than the rate shown in the table below):

Age	Rate of Breathing (Per Minute)
Infants < 2 months	60 or more
2 - 11 months	50 or more
1 - 5 years old children	40 or more
5 years and above aged people	24 or more

- Having difficulty while breathing (If a child is grunting or there is labored breathing indicated by depressions in the intercostal spaces or suprasternal fossa during breathing)
- If the SpO<sub>2</sub> is below 94 or SpO<sub>2</sub> level drops by 5 points after 6 minutes walking.
- If the hand and feet remain cold.
- The patients show skin mottling / petechial or purpuric rashes as shown below in the picture.



- If the lips or tongue turns bluish.



## Body Condition and Oxygen Levels:

- If the patient has problems in breathing and the SpO<sub>2</sub> levels falls below 94, till the time medical help can be availed, she / he can be put in a prone position. Prone positioning improves ventilation, keeps alveolar units open and makes breathing easy.
- As shown below in the picture, a person can lie down in prone position (on their stomach) and can place one pillow below the neck, one or two pillows below the chest through upper thighs and two pillows below the shins.



As shown in the pictures one must keep changing the positions from 1 to 4 in the same pattern. Each position should be held for 30 minutes to 2 hours. By doing this the oxygen levels can go up.

1. 30 minutes – 2 hours: laying on your belly



4. 30 minutes – 2 hours: lying on your left side



2. 30 minutes – 2 hours: laying on your right side



Then back to Position 1. Lying on your belly!



3. 30 minutes – 2 hours: sitting up



### **Caution:**

- Avoid proning for an hour after meals.
- Maintain proning for only as much times as easily tolerable. One may prone for up to 16 hours a day, in multiple cycles, as felt comfortable. Pillows may be adjusted slightly to alter pressure areas and for comfort. Keep a track of any pressure sores or injuries, especially, around bony prominences.
- Pregnant women, patients with major heart conditions and patients with unstable spine, femur or pelvic fractures should avoid prone positioning.

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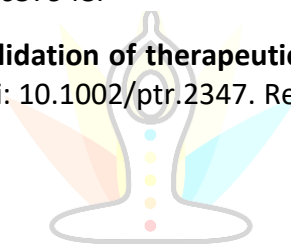
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## **Appendix-1**

### **Body-Mind Relaxation for Strengthening Immunity**

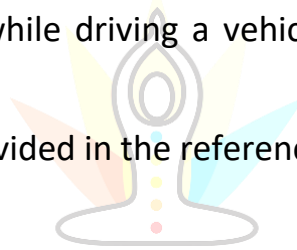
"A tense mind can never exist in a relaxed body." There are many evidences indicating that the body (muscular) relaxation leads to relaxation of the mind. And while body and mind are relaxing, our positive (empowering) thoughts can create healthy psychological, biological and behavioural responses. In context of this scientific understanding, Dr. B. M. Palan has prepared audio recordings of guided Body-Mind Relaxation sessions with auto-suggestions for strengthening immunity.

The audio recordings are available in English, Hindi and Gujarati languages on website <https://www.nisargopachar.org/resources/audio> or <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCguudS0WL-3NN-kdYUJzBkw>

One may use these recordings for doing her / his session twice a day, at any convenient time, in a comfortable position of the body, sitting on a recliner, sofa, chair, floor or lying on a bed with or without pillow.

Please avoid using these recordings where normal vigilance and alertness to one's surroundings are important, e.g. while driving a vehicle, riding a bicycle or working on a machine.

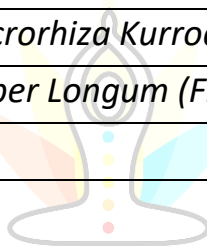
Please refer a list of studies provided in the reference section of this article for scientific evidences of this kind of therapy.



## Appendix – 2

### Recipe for Arogya Rakshak Kadha (Decoction for Health Protection)

Sr No.	Herb	Botanical Name	Quantity
1	Indian Tinospora	<i>Tinospora Cordifolia</i>	30 gm
2	Holy Basil	<i>Ocimum Sanctum</i>	30 gm
3	Dry Ginger	<i>Zinziber Officinalis</i>	30 gm
4	Turmeric	<i>Curcuma Longa</i>	30 gm
5	Ashwagandha	<i>Withania Somnifera</i>	30 gm
6	Long Pepper Root	<i>Piper Longum (Rhizome)</i>	30 gm
7	Purple Flebane	<i>Centratherum Anthelminticum</i>	30 gm
8	Black Cumin	<i>Nigella Sativa</i>	30 gm
9	Liquorice Root	<i>Glycyrrhiza Glabra</i>	25 gm
10	Chirata	<i>Swertia Chirata</i>	15 gm
11	Kutaki (Hellebore)	<i>Picrorhiza Kurroa</i>	15 gm
12	Long Pepper Fruit	<i>Piper Longum (Fruit)</i>	5 gm
	Total		300 gm



- Boil mixture of all the herbs (10 gm) in 200 ml of water on mild flame till it remains one fourth (50 ml). Serve 50 ml per person after straining.
- One can add half a spoon (around 2 gms) of Liquorice Root while boiling, if the decoction is too bitter. One can also add jaggery after preparation of the decoction.
- The above measurement is for one person. One can adjust the quantity as per the number of persons in the family.
- It is better to consume decoction warm.
- Serve 25 ml to children less than 15 years of age.
- Avoid eating anything half an hour before and after having the decoction.



### Appendix – 3

#### Food items: Easy or Difficult for Digestion

Whether a food item is easily digestible or not, depends on a person's digestive capacity (gastric fire) and properties of that food item. Other factors including whether the food is warm or cold, fresh or stale, quantity and density of food, time of the meal, and physical health and mental state of the person at the time of having meals also affect digestion. General instructions for diet have been mentioned earlier in this article. In this section, we have tried to provide a list of select food items classified as easy or difficult to digest (light or heavy on digestive system), based on their properties. Usually, after 2-3 hours of having a meal, if stomach becomes light and one feels hungry at the time of the next meal, then it is understood that the previous meal was easy to digest.

Grains	Easy to digest	Rice, Finger Millet (Ragi), Kodo Millet (Kodra), Sorghum (Jowar)
	Moderate to digest	Barley
	Difficult to digest	Wheat, Pearl Millet (Bajra)
	Grain becomes heavy on digestion by grinding it to flour, making the flour refined, frying, combining it with milk, curd, sugar or jaggery. Grains become easier to digest by cooking it by boiling the whole grains, roasting the grains, and making flour after roasting the grains. Boiled grains are easier to digest than fried ones and roasted grains are easier to digest than boiled ones. Grains from one year old crop are easier to digest compared to the one from fresh crops.	
Pulses	Easy to digest	Green gram, Moth bean, Lentil, Horse gram
	Moderate to digest	Bengal gram, Red gram, Peas
	Difficult to digest	Black gram, Cow pea, Field bean, Soya bean
	Pulses become easier to digest by increasing the liquidity of Dal, cooking them with moderate spices, and boiling them properly. Pulses become difficult to digest by making the preparation thicker, frying and by adding jaggery, sugar, curd or flour.	
Vegetables	Easy to digest	Bottle gourd, Brinjal, Pointed gourd, Silk squash, Ridge gourd, Drumstick, Bitter gourd, Onion, Carrot, Green amaranth, Fenugreek
	Moderate to digest	Pumpkin, Cluster bean, Spinach
	Difficult to digest	Potato, Sweet potato, Ladies finger, Pink bean
	Vegetables become heavier on digestion by using oil or ghee, curd, flour and by frying. Vegetables become easier to digest by seasoning with moderate spices, by boiling to remove excess water, by roasting directly in the fire, by boiling in water without covering the vessel.	
Fruits	Easy to digest	Pomegranate, Indian gooseberry, Pear, Papaya, Sapodilla
	Moderate to digest	Grapes, Mangoes, Dates, Figs, Coconut, Banana, Guava, Custard apple
Milk Products	Easy to digest	Goat's milk and Curd, buttermilk made from Goat's milk, buttermilk made from Cow's milk
	Moderate to digest	Cow's milk
	Difficult to digest	Curd made from Cow's milk, Buffalo's milk, buttermilk and curd made from Buffalo's milk (very heavy on digestion)
Fried food items, Dairy sweets, food items with excess fat like oil or ghee, cold food items, food items made from refined wheat flour, bread and bakery products, non-vegetarian food items like eggs, chicken, and beef are heavy or very heavy on digestion. Grains, Pulses and Vegetables become easier to digest by seasoning with spices like Coriander, Cumin, Ajwain (Omum), Garlic, Ginger, Dry Ginger and other similar spices.		