

# COVID-19 SUMMARY GUIDANCE #8

## Treatment guidelines and medicines to be stocked

1. Currently, there is no specific treatment medicine or preventive vaccine for COVID-19 and no medicines or vaccines have been fully tested for safety and efficacy.
2. At present, antiviral therapy is mainly used, as well as symptomatic and supportive treatment based on the clinical condition of the patient. Supportive treatments include oxygen therapy, hydration, fever and pain control, and antibiotics if bacterial co-infection is present or likely.
3. Some of the antiviral medicines that have been used include  $\alpha$ -Interferon, lopinavir/ritonavir, ribavirin and umifenovir. In some patients, symptoms improved significantly with remdesivir.
4. Chloroquine phosphate and hydroxychloroquine have efficiently inhibited SARS-CoV-2 infection *in vitro*, with hydroxychloroquine showing lower toxicity than chloroquine phosphate.
5. The dosing regimen for the above-mentioned medicines should be carefully formulated and their use closely monitored for safety and effectiveness.
6. There is currently no conclusive evidence to establish a direct association between the use of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (including ibuprofen) and increased risk of infection or severity of disease. Nevertheless, other medicines such as paracetamol /acetaminophen may be considered for the management of fever in COVID-19 patients if appropriate.
7. There is no conclusive evidence that ACE inhibitors or angiotensin receptor blockers could predispose individuals to adverse outcomes should they become infected with COVID-19. Patients taking these medicines should continue treatment unless specifically advised to stop by their medical team.
8. Corticosteroids are not routinely recommended for viral pneumonia or acute respiratory distress syndrome and should be avoided because of the potential for prolonging viral replication, unless indicated for other reasons (e.g., COPD exacerbation, refractory septic shock following Surviving Sepsis Campaign Guidelines).
9. For COVID-19 patients with rapid disease progression, severe and critical illness, convalescent plasma therapy can be tried.
10. Vaccines against pneumonia, such as pneumococcal vaccine and *Haemophilus influenzae* type B vaccine, do not provide protection against COVID-19.