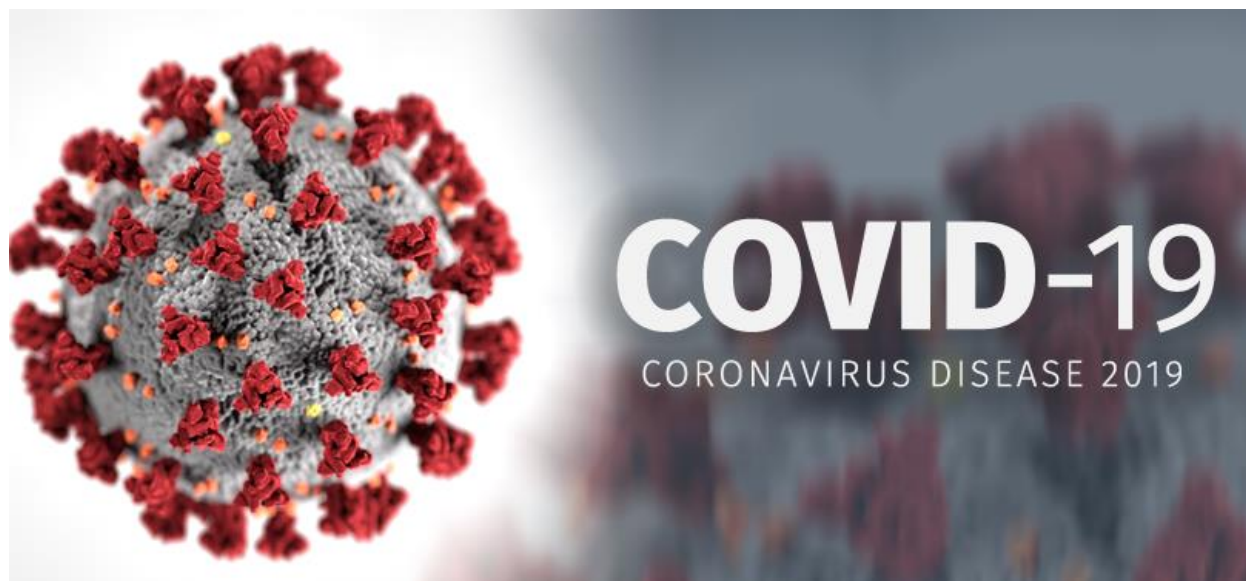


Clients Awareness

Mountain Tourism Health Protocols

2022



Introduction

The Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that are known to cause illness ranging from the symptoms of a common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS).

This Protocol aims to provide a general introduction to COVID-19 and is intended to inform both trekking staff and clients providing them with a framework to safely manage groups, and where possible the environments, everyone might encounter during a trek in Nepal.

Mountain Tourism is a vital contributor not only to the national economy but also for all those communities, families and individuals working in tourism.

However, visitors will only come to Nepal if they feel safe so it is critical that all trekking staff and clients understand the implications of following the appropriate protocols.

It is the group's responsibility to, not only keep safe, but also to acknowledge the impact of their presence on members of the communities that they might have a close contact with. The Guide / leader and trek participants must carry out intuitively, risk assessments on the health safety issues that will impact on the safety and well-being of all concerned.

COVID SAFE MOUNTAIN TOURISM

BREAK THE CHAIN

The virus transmits amongst people and needs to travel between one to the other via a medium. We need to break the chain to protect ourselves and our loved ones



basics

MASK

Helps by not allowing transmission to happen from nose or mouth



HYGIENE

helps by not allowing transfer from touch points through droplets

DISTANCE

helps by keeping people far enough for transmission not to happen



AVOID GROUP

allows you to physically distance easily

HAND WASH

helps by not allowing virus to transfer from hands



CARE FOR ELDERLY

helps by reducing susceptible hosts who can fall seriously sick

At the present time, and for the purposes of safety, it is assumed that all closed group treks that include clients that know each other, have travelled to Nepal together and have made their own arrangements with OTWT for their hotel accommodation.

It is also assumed that the clients have accepted the risk of shared accommodation.



COVID SAFE MOUNTAIN TOURISM

GUESTS & TRAVELLERS



MASK UP
when in transportation or with local communities or other groups



WASH HANDS
or use hand sanitizers frequently

ASK FOR BRIEFINGS
from activity providers, guides, and agencies on best practices

RESPECT
guidelines made by the community, lodges, guides, transport etc.



PHYSICALLY DISTANCE
from other groups and local communities as much as possible

LEADERS & CREW



MASK UP
when near guests and with guides and crew

BRIEF GUESTS
about best practices from time to time

RESPECT
local guidelines

BE AWARE
of emergency protocols

best practice

Understanding transmission of the Virus

Person-to-Person Transmission

Experts believe the virus that causes COVID-19 spreads mainly from person to person. There are several ways this can happen:

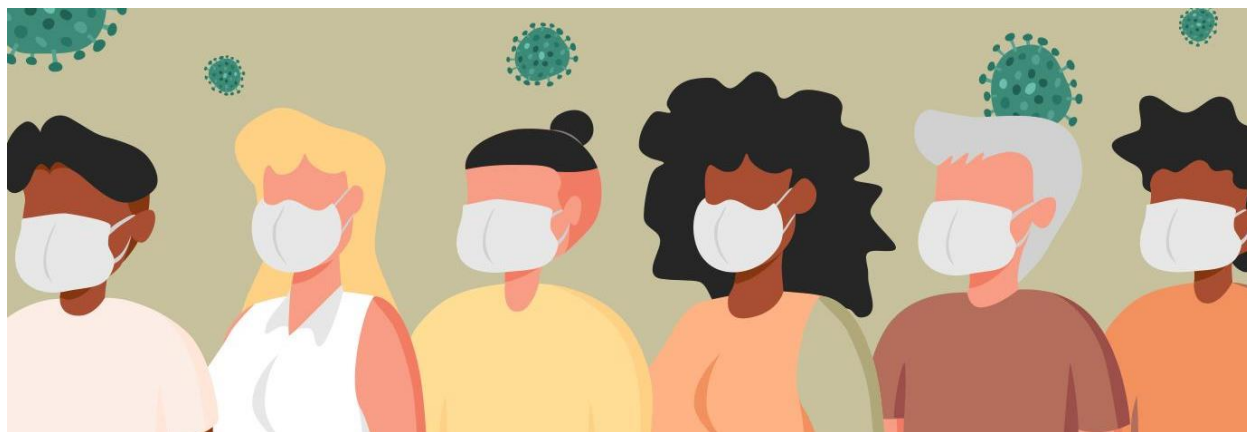
Droplets or aerosols. When an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks, droplets or tiny particles called aerosols carry the virus into the air from their nose or mouth. Anyone who is within 6 feet of that person can breathe those vapor droplets into their lungs.

Airborne transmission. Research shows that the virus can live in the air for up to 3 hours. It can get into your lungs if someone who has it breathes out and you breathe that air in. Experts are divided on how often the virus spreads through the airborne route and how much it contributes to a potential pandemic.

Surface transmission. Another way to catch the virus is through touching potentially contaminated surfaces. You may touch a countertop or doorknob that's contaminated and then touch your nose, mouth, or eyes. The virus can live on surfaces like plastic and stainless steel for 2 to 3 days. To prevent the spread on the virus clean and disinfect all counters, door knobs, and other surfaces you and your group touch.

In general. Maintain good general health principles, wear a mask in restricted or crowded spaces, use hand sanitizer regularly and specifically before and after using washroom facilities and before all meals of food / tea breaks.

Nepal has the cultural custom of greeting with a Namaste and clasped hand gesture. Respect this culture and avoid handshaking!



COVID SAFE MOUNTAIN TOURISM

TRANSPORT

MASK UP
While driving & ask passengers to do so!

WASH VEHICLE
if possible or at least clean touch points with soap and water

WASH HANDS
or use hand sanitizers frequently as drivers & passengers

LOOK AWAY
while chatting inside the vehicle or at least do not face each other

SHOPS

MASK UP
when near guests and with guides and crew

WASH HANDS
or use hand sanitizers frequently before and after transaction

GREET GUESTS
from a distance with a verbal greeting.

COMMUNITIES

MASK UP
when near guests and with guides and crew

GREET GUESTS
from a distance with a verbal greeting.

best practice

Meet and Greet

When meeting your group all connects at the airport focus on Nepalese culture and the use of 'Namaste',- Keep Nepal Nepalese! Although try to maintain eye contact but avoid speaking directly into another person's face look slightly away and maintain distancing and wear a mask.

If you intend to handle luggage wear disposable gloves from the point of leaving the aircraft and then dispose of them appropriately.

If disposing of masks make sure you cut or pull the loops to prevent them getting tangled around wild animals even though you dispose of them in the appropriate manner.

Track and Trace Scheme

Before going on trek the guide will prepared a track / trace system. For example, a printed information card with the Agent's, guide's name and contact number. These cards should be handed to important people with whom the group comes into contact with – transport drivers, hotel management, lodge owners etc.

1 - Transfer from the International Airport to the Kathmandu hotel to the start of the trek

Under normal circumstances the journey from Kathmandu to the start of the trek is carried out either by road, by air or a combination of both forms of transport.

Every element of the journey has a potential risk, our aim is to minimise that risk.

You will be following the accepted and agreed protocols and, for those that have visited Nepal before, these new norms might seem strange but they are all being implemented for the safety of everybody.

It is important to keep the group self-contained.

Make sure all the group have the correct hand sanitiser and face masks, and that they use them appropriately.

- This should include using the hand sanitiser frequently and certainly before and after coming into contact with surfaces, the cleanliness of which could raise cause for concern.

If going out for the evening meal: -

- The group tables should be appropriately distanced from other tables and should be equipped with a sanitiser
- Clients should also take their own sanitiser for personal use.

- Wear a mask when walking in Thamel
- If possible avoid close contact with anyone outside of the immediate trekking group.

Take an appropriate container into which discarded masks, gloves and empty sanitizer bottles can be deposited. It is important that these are disposed of appropriately – make sure all mask loops are pulled apart for the protection of wild life once the safety items have left your control.

- The group needs to be collectively responsible for its own protection.

2 - Daily Routine

Follow the normal daily trek routine as usual but with additional focus on personal safety.

The wake-up tea will be carried on a tray, the clients should take the cup from the tray.

If it is appropriate breakfast will be eaten out doors to avoid the dining room congestion in lodges.

Briefing will be done in appropriate spaces maybe outside the lodge distanced from other groups or people who might be in close proximity.

Following the normal trekking style.

Chose a suitable lodge or location for lunch – again follow all the protocols

When arriving at the next overnight lodge location – hold a briefing before going into the lodge.

Leave your track and trace card with the lodge owner

3 - Once at the hotel / lodge while on trek

Being outdoors and in less confined spaces has proved to be a safer environment and can reduce the risk of spreading the virus.

It is very important to implement physical distancing and to follow all other protocols while on trek.

As the evenings cool down people will tend to gather in the lodge dining rooms and in particular huddle around the stove.

While clients may keep to their own space porters and other staff will move around due to a lack of understanding as to what the consequences are likely to be.

Areas of concern are the kitchens, toilets and dining rooms

On reaching the lodge but before entering the building: -

- A briefing will be done so everyone knows exactly what the routine will be once inside the building.
- Emphasise the new normal safety issues for personal safety

Danger points –

- The use of water bottles, door handling, avoiding people outside of the immediate group.
- Transmission in the dining room
- Transmission via other staff (lodge or other groups)

Minimise the risk –

Wearing masks out-side of bed rooms, social distancing and the use of the sanitiser.

An obvious danger contact point is with the kitchen staff.

- Wear masks in the lodges, use the sanitiser before and after the meal
- .
- Keep to one table
- Use serviettes and sanitizer
- If the conditions are appropriate it might be possible to have food outside

If going out for an evening walk make sure you are prepared – mask, hand sanitizer, social distancing.

Leave your track and trace card with the lodge and restaurant management team

COVID SAFE MOUNTAIN TOURISM



ACCOMODATION

DISTANCE GUESTS

from different groups at least two meters apart



MASK UP

when near guests and with guides and crew



FIX TABLES

for guests at same table for each meal reducing cleaning points



INSTRUCT CREW

to stay with the group at all times, not to enter kitchens & wander around in the community



CLEAN TOUCH POINTS

like table tops, chairs, doorknobs, windows, doors, bedside tables, taps and toilet with soap and water



WASH HANDS

or use hand sanitizers frequently before and after serving guests



SUN DRY

bedding used by guests after they leave or change bedsheets. Insist on use of sleeping bags or liners



GREET GUESTS

from a distance with a verbal greeting. No hand shakes or hugs.



SERVE FOOD

at edge of table and ask guests to take it themselves



RECORD

all arrivals and departures diligently for contact tracing when needed



best practice

4 - In case someone develops virus symptoms or suspected virus while on trek

Watch for symptoms

- Fever or chills.

- Cough.
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing.
- Fatigue.
- Muscle or body aches.
- Headache.
- New loss of taste or smell.
- Sore throat.

Most people infected with the COVID-19 virus will experience mild to moderate respiratory illness and recover without requiring special treatment. Older people, and those with underlying medical problems like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, and cancer are more likely to develop serious illness.

The best way to prevent and slow down transmission is to be well informed about the COVID-19 virus, the disease it causes and how it spreads. Protect yourself and others from infection by washing your hands or using a sanitizer frequently and avoid touching your face.

The COVID-19 virus spreads primarily through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose when an infected person coughs or sneezes, so it's important that you also practice respiratory etiquette (for example, by coughing into a flexed elbow).

In the spring and while at altitude people often develop colds. It is important not to panic and to keep the group calm.

Action: -

- Practice strict social distancing along with the mask and sanitizer use
- Use a separate room and bathroom (if possible).
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing; going to the bathroom; and before eating food.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer

- Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.
- Avoid dirty lodge room to avoid further transmission of the virus as needed.

However, some clients may need emergency medical attention. Watch for symptoms and learn.

When to Seek Emergency Medical Attention: -

Look for **emergency warning signs** for COVID-19.

If someone is showing any of these signs, **seek emergency medical care immediately**

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion
- Inability to wake or stay awake
- Bluish lips or face

This is not a conclusive list of all possible symptoms.

Get further professional advice if someone's condition is giving cause for concern

What should you do and advise your clients if they have had close contact with the infected client?

It is impossible to go into quarantine while on trek, so it is essential that all the protocols are strictly followed.

If someone becomes infected then it is likely that other members of the group are also infected.

The guide is responsible for informing other people who have had potential contact with the infected person.

It may be necessary to evacuate someone to an appropriate quarantine / medical facility. However, keep in mind the severity of the situation, don't panic but then don't leave calling for help to the last minute.

Keep a very close eye on all members of the party.

Administer the appropriate treatment to the infected client, especially to easing the breathing situation.

Example of Track and Trace

Card

Company /Agent's Logo	Agent Address Contact details
Trekking from (lodge) contact no	Trekking to (Lodge) contact no.
Guide's name	Contact no

