



ISKCON

FOUNDER ACARYA HIS DIVINE GRACE
A.C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI PRABHUPADA



GBC
STRATEGIC
PLANNING

GUIDELINES FOR A SAFE RE-OPENING

A DEVOTEE HANDBOOK



INTRODUCTION

As our temples re-open, we would like to assure you that your well-being is important to us. Hence, this handbook which contains recommendations for management, devotees, visitors and temple employees, has been developed.

In this fight against COVID-19, everyone has a critical role to play. It is essential to understand our responsibilities, not only in terms of our services, but also towards the environment, society, and our families. This devotee handbook includes essential guidelines and protocols that you are expected to follow while at any temple premises.

Owing to the diverse nature of ISKCON Temples, these recommendations may be implemented by the temple management according to their local situations, without raising the risk of infections. Also, please comply with the relevant regulations from your local government.

REPRODUCE AND USE AS YOU WISH.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Strategic Planning Support at sps@gbcstrategicplanningteam.com

DISCLAIMER

This Handbook is strictly meant to be a collection of general information and guidelines meant to assist temples that are planning to re-open. Any best practices or related information shared in the Handbook are intended solely for guidance purposes and are not meant to replace any professional, legal and/or medical and health advice that you ought to procure in your respective jurisdictions and in accordance with the regulations as stipulated by the respective government agencies, departments and ministries, including but not limited to COVID-19 related issues. Accordingly, under no circumstances will the publishers and authors of this Handbook be liable for any loss or damage caused by your reliance on any information communicated or provided in this Handbook. The temples and any users of this handbook, agree and undertake to indemnify and to hold the publishers and authors of the Handbook in all respects harmless against all losses, actions, demands, suits, damages, proceedings, claims, costs and expenses whatsoever suffered or incurred by the temples and users of this Handbook arising from or in connection with the information communicated or provided in this Handbook.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. PRIORITISING SAFETY	
1.1. Collecting information	2
1.2. Deep cleaning and sanitisation of the premises	3
1.3. Rostering of devotee service & staff	6
1.4. Social distancing norms at temple	7
1.5. Personal protection	8
1.6. Quarantine Zone	9
2. GUIDELINES FOR DEVOTEES & EMPLOYEES	
2.1. Before leaving for temple	11
2.2. While commuting to temple	12
2.3. At temple	13
2.4. After temple	20
3. BEST PRACTICES	
Precaution is better than cure	21
4. COVID-19 KNOW-HOWS	
4.1. Symptoms	25
4.2. How to wear your face masks correctly	26
4.3. How to sanitise your hands correctly	27
4.4. How to wash your hands correctly	28
4.5. General recommendations	29
5. SAFE RE-OPENING RESOURCES	30



1 PRIORITISING SAFETY

KEEPING OUR TEMPLES & CENTERS SAFE

The safety of all is of the utmost importance to us. To ensure safety, here are some of the significant proactive measures we highly recommend to keep our community safe.





1.1 COLLECTING INFORMATION

- 1 All visitors including employees must inform the temple authority in case any anyone develops COVID-19 symptoms.
- 2 In the case of anyone (including family members) testing positive, the respective person must strictly follow quarantine precautions for a minimum of 14 days.
- 3 Visitors and employees will be required to fill in a personal details form upon entry of the temple. This information will be kept confidential unless requested by the health authorities, in the event of a positive COVID-19 case.



1.2 DEEP CLEANING AND SANITISATION OF THE TEMPLE PREMISES

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS



- 1 Disinfecting, deep-cleaning, and sanitisation of public areas should be done daily.
- 2 Closed bins are to be provided for disposal of waste, paper tissues or any other material.
- 3 Bins are to be cleared at the end of the day.
- 4 Receptions must have sanitisers and an alcohol-based disinfectant, along with paper tissues.
- 5 All common areas, take aways, gift shops, etc. and equipment are to be sanitised multiple times a day.



- 6 Doors in common areas:
 - All doors are to be kept open to avoid touching the door handles.
 - Hand sanitisers are to be available at every door.
 - Handles and release or exit switches of functional doors disinfected regularly.

Note: The purpose for deep cleaning and sanitisation is to eliminate the risk of infection by coming into contact with respiratory droplets that may have settled on surface.

1.2 DEEP CLEANING AND SANITISATION OF THE TEMPLE PREMISES

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS



8 Air conditioners must be serviced for air purification and ventilation, where applicable.

9 Certified 'Air Purifiers' must be installed in the reception areas, where applicable.



10 Cleaning and disinfection protocols must be extended to all washrooms.



11 Washrooms must be well equipped with soap dispensers, paper tissues, hand sanitisers and closed bins.



12 All bhoga preparation and cooking areas: deity, take-away, restaurant and devotee prasadam kitchens must be cleaned and disinfected after each use (where applicable).

13 All bhoga storage, preparation and cooking areas must be well equipped with hand sanitisers and disinfectants.



Caution: keep sanitisers and disinfectants away from fire and gas.

1.2 DEEP CLEANING AND SANITISATION OF THE TEMPLE PREMISES

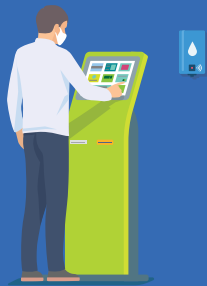
ADDITIONAL INSTRUCTIONS



- 1 Hygiene or safety certificate issued by the local authorities, if any, must be published at the entrance and on the temple website.



- 2 Receptions, gift shops, take-away counters and offices must have sanitisers and alcohol-based disinfectants along with paper tissues.



- 3 Tissues and alcohol-based wet wipes must be made available at visitor touch points: point of sale machines, tablets and desktop tabs, where applicable.



- 4 The Following touch points must be sanitised:

- Bhoga receiving areas, baskets, trolleys, and all bhoga.

All supplies which are

- moving in and out of the temple premises.

- Both luggage and courier packages received from outside.



1.3 ROSTERING OF DEVOTEE SERVICES & STAFF

With reference to local government regulations and A SAFE RE-OPENING of our Temples, all Head of Departments of the Temples must identify devotees and employees who may follow any of the options below:

- Continue to carry out their service and work from home for the entire week.
- Resume their services and work from temple for the entire week.
- Resume and work from temple for 2-3 days of the week.

Any local legislation on working methodology and/staffing will take precedence over these guidelines.

Note: All temples should recruit security or devotees on a role call/roster, to ensure that there is adequate enforcement of the COVID-19 recommendations for the SAFE RE-OPENING of our temples.



1.4 SOCIAL DISTANCING NORMS AT TEMPLE

GENERAL NORMS



- 1 Social distancing floor marking, spaced 2m (6ft) must be provided at all relevant locations.



- 2 Queue markings will be provided at specific areas, e.g. the darshan queue etc.

ADDITIONAL TEMPLE ROOM NORMS

- 1 Seating arrangements must be based on the social distancing norms.
- 2 Seats must be marked for clear understanding of which ones to be occupied or left empty.
- 3 Safe distance barricades must be installed at reception and for darshans.
- 4 Apply social distancing floor markings, spaced 2m (6ft) apart
- 5 Clear signage of the social distancing and other temple room norms must be installed at reception, entrance of temple room and at a strategic position in the temple room.





1.5 PERSONAL PROTECTION



GENERAL

- 1 Ensure effective disposal of used masks and gloves by disposing in closed bins.



- 2 Face masks, gloves and paper tissues must be made available for any staff or devotees performing services.



SPECIFIC

- 1 Devotees and staff must wear a mask and gloves while interacting with visitors or whilst receiving bhoga and flowers etc.
- 2 Devotees and staff must wear masks and gloves during the preparation and distribution of prasadam.
- 3 Visitors and devotees must wear masks before being permitted to enter the temple premises. The mask must be worn at all times.





1.6 QUARANTINE ZONE

- 1 A quarantine zone must be identified and implemented in alignment with local government guidelines.
- 2 The quarantine zone must be separated from the rest of temple residence premises, as far as possible.
- 3 The information above information is to be clearly known to all residents.
- 4 The quarantine zone must be identified in an area that does not place the temple residents at risk.
- 5 The quarantine zone to be labelled as 'restricted entry' or 'authorised personnel only.'
- 6 The quarantine zone must be kept in a locked or access-controlled position until required.
- 7 Where applicable, the quarantine zone must have CCTV cameras to maintain a record/ audit trail as required.
- 8 Ensure records of who accessed the room and for what purpose are kept.
- 9 Normal disinfection procedures must be followed even if the zone is not being used.
- 10 The standard reporting, cleaning and disinfecting procedures must be followed, should there be a suspected or positive COVID-19 infected person using the zone.

Caution: Isolate any resident or senior visiting devotee returning from high risk areas or international destinations, to the temple residence, for 14 days. Only after a negative COVID-19 test result should they be allowed into other areas of the temple and to associate with devotees.





2 GUIDELINES FOR DEVOTEES & EMPLOYEES

KEEPING YOURSELF AND YOUR DEVOTEES SAFE

To keep our temples and public areas safe, devotees, visitors and employees are strongly recommended to follow the following guidelines:





2.1 BEFORE LEAVING FOR TEMPLE



- 1 Check your temperature daily. In case of flu, cold, fever, shortness of breath or other COVID-19 symptoms, stay home and inform a temple authority if you have visited the temple in the last 14 days. Consult a doctor, if needed.



- 2 Don't forget to carry a face mask with you. Always keep a spare mask with you.



- 3 Always carry an alcohol-based hand sanitiser with you.



- 4 Some governments require you to wear a mask while driving. Remember to put it on before leaving home.

CAUTION:

IF YOU OR ANYONE IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD HAS TESTED POSITIVE FOR COVID-19: do not come to the temple until you and all of your household members have fully recovered and have subsequently tested negative. Please notify temple authorities if you suspect you are sick with or have tested positive with COVID-19 within 14 days of visiting the temple.

RETURNING FROM HIGH-RISK AREAS? SELF-QUARANTINE FOR 14 DAYS:

If you, or visiting leaders, sannyasis, gurus or any members of your immediate group or family, have recently returned from locations with high concentrations of community spread of COVID-19, including international travel or a state that surging or other large metropolitan areas, self-quarantine for 14 days and do not come to the temple during this time.

VISITING AND TRAVELING LEADERS, SANNYASIS, GURUS, PREACHERS,

until you have self-quarantined for 14 days, refrain from doing home programs or programs in preaching centers.

PERSONS WITH UNDERLYING HEALTH CONDITIONS:

We urge anyone who is at higher risk of becoming severely ill from COVID-19 to continue sheltering at home, such as senior citizens and anyone with underlying health conditions. You can watch the temple programs online to greatly lower your risk of infection.

2.2 WHILE COMMUTING TO TEMPLE



1 Wear a face mask.

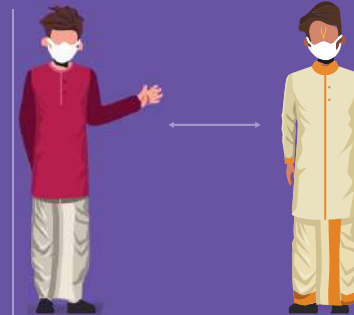
2 No one will be allowed to enter the temple premises without wearing a mask.



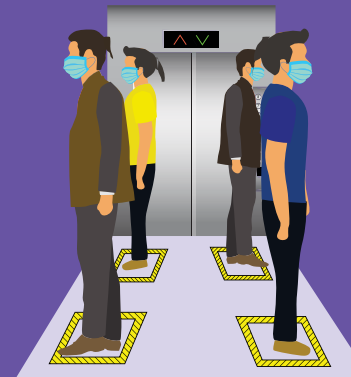
3 Avoid using public transport, if possible, and use personal vehicle for commuting.



4 In case of cab travel, it is recommended to limit to 2 passengers at a time.



5 Stand in a queue as requested by security guards, where applicable, and cooperate with them for thermal screening.



6 Follow social distancing norms in public or temple premises, wherever possible.

7 Avoid elevators, if possible. Ensure that elevators are not crowded and maintain social distancing while using one, where applicable.

2.3 AT TEMPLE - ENTRY AND COVID-19 SCREENING



1 You are required to wear a mask before entering the temple premises.

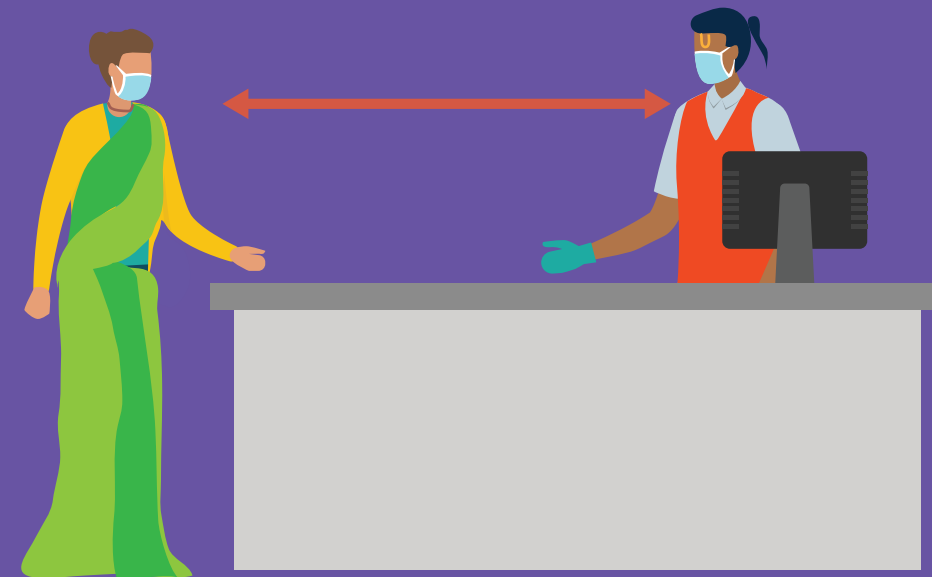
2 You are requested to please cooperate with all relevant COVID-19 screening protocols. You are expected to:

- self- disclose any COVID-19 symptoms.
- undergo thermal screening/temperature check.
- wear a mask.



3 You will not allow be allowed entry onto the temple premises should you exhibit any COVID - 19 symptoms and/are not wearing a face mask.

4. Dependent on jurisdiction and local authority, you may be required to provide your contact details before you are allowed access to the temple premises. The Temple may be required by law to provide visitor's information to the health authorities in case of a positive case.





2.3 AT TEMPLE - TEMPLE ROOM AND DARSHAN

- 1 You must wear a mask on entry and whilst on the temple premises including when leading kirtan.
- 2 You must sanitise your hands before entering the temple.
- 3 Maintain minimum social distancing of 2m (6ft) when you are around others in the temple.
- 4 Do not enter the temple or other areas where social distancing floor markings are fully occupied, or where the temple is overcrowded.
- 5 Follow the social distancing queue markings whilst taking darshan.
- 6 Do not offer obeisances (dandavats) on the floor. Offer pranams while standing.
- 7 During the arati or programme only stand or sit on a clearly demarcated spot.

- 8 Refrain from social gatherings in the temple room.
- 9 Sanitise hands frequently and after touching your face or any surface.
- 10 Disinfect microphone/stand and musical instruments before and after every use.

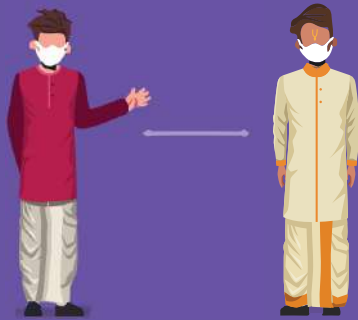
Note: Kirtan is a higher risk activity in terms of respiratory droplet transmission.

The essentials in this case are:

- Mask to be worn while singing
- Increase physical distancing to 2.5m (8ft)
- Proper ventilation (open windows, turn-on fans, no air conditioning, etc.)
- Limit kirtan for the duration of the arati
- Kirtan should only be led by devotees approved by the local temple authorities
- Options (revert to outside kirtans, play recorded kirtan).



2.3 AT TEMPLE - RESTAURANT, TAKE AWAY, DEVOTEE PRASADAM & GIFT SHOP



1 Do not enter the take-away, restaurant or devotee prasadam areas where social distancing floor or seating markings are fully occupied.

2 Follow the social distancing queue markings whilst waiting to be served at the take-away, devotee prasadam queue or gift shop and maintain social distancing.

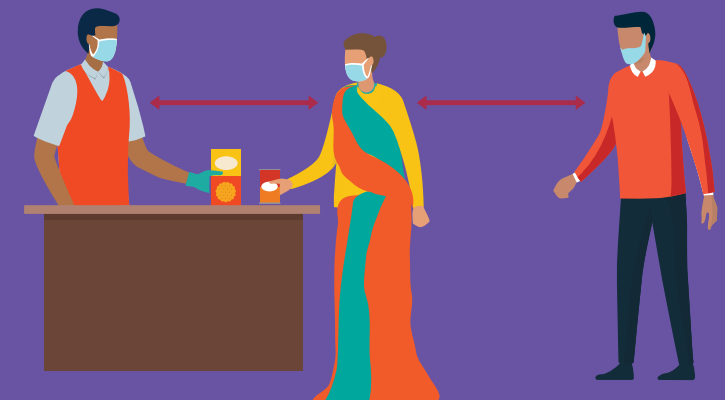


4 Whilst taking prasadam, ensure social distancing is maintained and only sit in designated seats.

5 While ordering food, be mindful of norms and restrictions. Sanitise your hands after touching anything.

6 Maintain physical distancing while collecting food at the take-away or purchasing at the gift shop or book table. Do not touch any food items without washing hands.

7 Wash hands with soap and water before and after your meal.



2.3 AT TEMPLE - EMPLOYEES AND DEVOTEES PERFORMING SERVICES



1 Wear a face mask while at temple performing service.

2 Adhere to social distancing guidelines ideally 2 metres (6 feet).



3 Inform your Temple Authority in case any family member develops COVID-19 symptoms.

4 In case any family member tests positive, necessary precautions must be taken and must be strictly followed by the devotee or employee.



5 Perform your service in one designated area and avoid going to other areas.



6 Ensure sanitisation of surfaces and equipment in service areas and workstations including desks, keyboards, telephones, etc, at the start of the day and at frequent intervals.

7 Wash hands regularly, especially after touching anything.



8 Avoid stepping outside the demarcated access areas.

9 Physical meetings are not recommended; use video conferencing, conference calls or other virtual modes.



Caution: keep sanitisers and disinfectants away from fire and gas.

2.3 AT TEMPLE - DEITY KITCHEN AND DEITY SERVICE



1 Sanitise your hands before entering the Deity department temple & regularly during your Deity service.



2 Acamana: Any water in the acamana cup must be discarded and washed with warm soapy water. This process must be followed after every use.

3 Surfaces: Kitchen and altar surfaces must be wiped with warm soapy water or bleach solution before and after every cooking, offering and dressing.



4 Mask: all devotees serving in the deity department must use clean face masks at all times even on the altar.

5 Confined spaces: A minimal number of devotees should be on the altar and in kitchen at the same time. Devotees should not be freely associating with each other, limit talking and bodily contact is prohibited.



6 Cloths: Tray cloths used for covering paraphernalia and other items as well as dishcloths must also be washed in hot soapy water after every use (each offering). It is also preferable to iron all cloth.



7 The Deity: The deities should not be sanitised. Do not use any sanitising liquid on the deities as alcohol is prohibited and bleach is harmful to the lord's form. The deity's outfits and jewelry should also not be sanitised. Wash your hands with warm soapy water before coming into contact with any of the deities and their respective paraphernalia.



8 Blowing of the conch: The conch must be washed thoroughly before and after use with warm soapy water. Refrain from blowing the conch. However gently tap the mouth piece three times with the palm of the right hand.

2.3 AT TEMPLE - DEITY KITCHEN AND DEITY SERVICE



- 9** Paraphernalia: All arati and puja paraphernalia must be washed after every use by the offering pujari themselves. This includes the bell after every use. Camara and peacock fan handles should also be wiped down with bleach solution after every use.



- 10** Flowers: Keep flowers untouched for 5 days before use or pick flowers directly from the trees yourself. Maha flowers should not be distributed to devotees to smell after the arati.



- 11** Bhoga: All cooking ingredients (within packaging) must be wiped down with an appropriate bleach solution before entering the deity department or before being refrigerated.
- 12** Caranamrita: Caranamrita should not be distributed unless it can be prepacked into small containers.



- 13** COVID-19 positive pujari: If a pujari tests positive for COVID-19, then a thorough decontamination should take place. This includes a thorough scrub down of all surfaces, door handles and walls with a warm bleach solution.



- 14** Hygiene etiquette: Do not touch your hair, face, mouth, eyes, nose and mask. If you do then wash your hands immediately. Devotees should sneeze into folded arms into one's elbow area. Masks do not prevent the spread of particles that are propelled during a sneeze or a cough, these additional measures should thus be followed very strictly.



Caution: keep sanitisers and disinfectants away from fire and gas.

2.3 AT TEMPLE - ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES FOR THOSE PERFORMING SERVICE



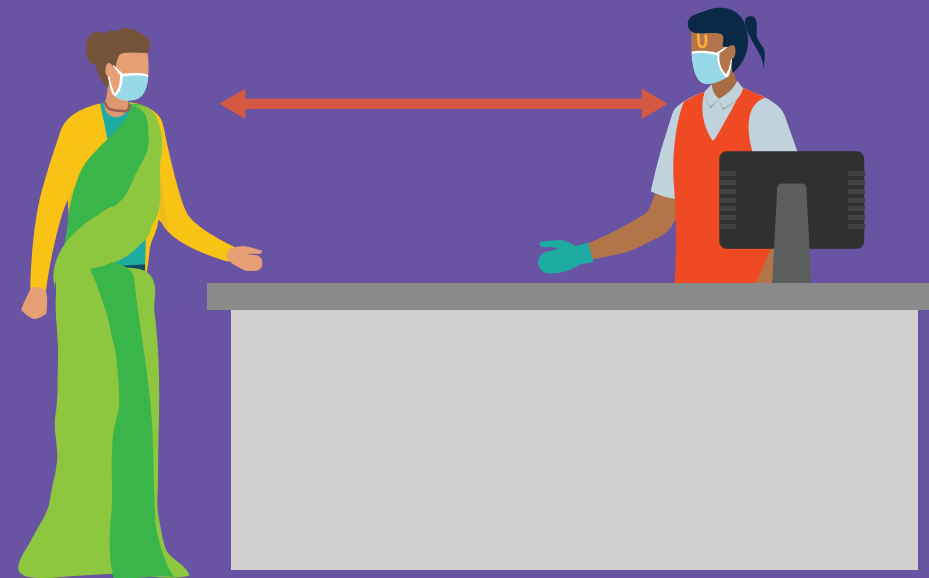
1 Always wear a facemask while interacting with visitors, or performing any other services including the preparation, cooking and distribution of prasadam.



2 Visitors must wear a face masks before entering the Temple Premises.

3 Visitors must be made aware of the screening protocols in place for COVID-19, including self- disclosing their symptoms, undergoing a screening, wearing masks, and that they would not be allowed entry into the temple premises should they exhibit any COVID-19 symptoms.

4 Dependent on jurisdiction and local authority, you may be required to obtain contact details of a visitor before allowing them access to the temple premises. The temple may be required by law to provide visitor's information to the health authorities in case of a positive case.





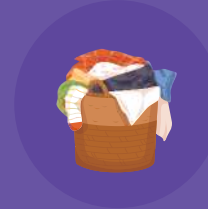
2.4 AFTER TEMPLE



- 1 Leave your shoes outside your homes and your bags just inside the entrance.
- 2 Ask family members to keep the doors open so that you avoid touching handles.
- 3 Use sanitisers before entering your house.



- 4 Disinfect your shoes and bags.



- 5 Take a quick shower and drop your clothes in the laundry.



- 6 Discard single-use masks in a covered dustbin.



3

BEST PRACTICES

PRECAUTION IS BETTER THAN CURE

You can reduce your chances of being infected or spreading COVID-19 by taking some simple precautions at your workplace, while being at home, or while commuting:





PRECAUTIONS TO PREVENT THE SPREAD



1 Wear A Face Mask

COVID-19 is primarily transmitted between people through respiratory droplets. We recommend wearing a face mask, which can prevent the transmission.



2 Practice Social Distancing

Keep at least 2 metres (6 feet) distance between yourself and others.



3 Wash or Sanitise Your Hands Regularly

Washing or sanitising your hands with soap and water or using alcohol-based hand rub kills viruses that may be on your hands.



4 Avoid Handshakes and Hugging

Respiratory viruses can be passed by shaking hands and bodily contact. Greet people with folded palms, a wave, a nod, or a bow instead.



5 Avoid Going to Crowded Places

Maintaining social distancing is difficult in crowd and you are more likely to come into close contact with someone that has COVID-19.



6 Avoid Touching Eyes, Nose & Mouth

Hands touch many surfaces and can pick up viruses, which can enter your body through eyes, nose or mouth, and infect you.



7 Maintain Good Respiratory Hygiene

Cover your mouth and nose with your bent elbow, tissue or handkerchief when you cough or sneeze. Dispose the used tissue immediately and wash your hands. In case of using handkerchief, clean it just after reaching home.

PRECAUTIONS TO PREVENT THE SPREAD



8 Disinfect Surfaces and Equipment at Temple regularly

COVID-19 mainly spreads from person to person, but it can also be left on objects like your mobile phones, or surfaces. Thus, make sure to disinfect your workplace or regular-use electronic or households frequently.



9 Focus on Personal Health

Increase your intake of immunity-boosting food items and exercise regularly to keep yourself fit. Refrain from any activities that weaken your lungs.



10 Stay Home and Self-isolate Even with Minor Symptoms

If you are experiencing minor symptoms like cough, headache or mild fever, stay home and self-isolate until you recover.



11 Seek Medical Attention in Case of Major Symptoms

If you have fever, cough or experience difficulty in breathing, seek medical attention, but call by telephone in advance, if possible, and follow the directions of your local health authority.



12 Stay Informed

Keep up to date on the latest information from trusted sources, such as World Health Organisation (WHO), or your local and national health authorities.



4

COVID-19 KNOW-HOWS

AWARENESS IS THE KEY





4.1 SYMPTOMS

COVID-19 affects different people in different ways. Most infected people will develop mild to moderate illness and recover without hospitalisation.

● MOST COMMON ● LESS COMMON ● SERIOUS



If you experience any of these symptoms:

- 1 Request a check-up as a precautionary measure as per protocol of your local health authority. If advised for a COVID-19 test, please visit an authorised centre and get the test done.
- 2 Avoid direct contact with others around you to prevent spreading of the virus.

If you are feeling unwell, immediately inform your temple authority.



4.2 HOW TO WEAR YOUR FACE MASKS CORRECTLY



- 1 Before putting on a mask, **clean your hands** with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water.



- 2 **Cover mouth and nose** with mask and make sure there are **no gaps** between your face and the mask.



- 3 **Avoid touching the mask** while using it. If you do, clean your hands with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water.



- 4 **Replace** the mask with a new one as soon as it is damp and **DO NOT re-use single-use masks.**



- 5 **To remove the mask:** Remove it from behind (do not touch the front of mask).



- 6 **Discard immediately** in a closed bin; clean hands with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water.





4.3 HOW TO SANITISE YOUR HANDS CORRECTLY



- 1 Apply a palmful of the sanitiser in a cupped hand, covering all surfaces.



- 2 Rub hands palm to palm.



- 3 Right palm over left dorsum with interlaced fingers and vice versa.



- 4 Palm to palm with fingers interlaced.



- 5 Backs of fingers to opposing palms with fingers interlocked.



- 6 Rotational rubbing of left thumb clasped in right palm and vice versa.



- 7 Rotational rubbing, backwards and forwards with clasped fingers of right hand in left palm and vice versa.



- 8 Once dry, your hands are safe.



4.4 HOW TO WASH YOUR HANDS CORRECTLY



1 Wet hands with water.



2 Apply enough soap to cover all hand surfaces.



3 Rub hands palm to palm.



4 Right palm over left dorsum with interlaced fingers and vice versa.



5 Palm to palm with fingers interlaced.



6 Backs of fingers to opposing palms with fingers interlocked.



7 Rotational rubbing of left thumb clasped in right palm and vice versa.



8 Rotational rubbing, backwards and forwards with clasped fingers of right hand in left palm and vice versa.



9 Rinse hands with water.



10 Dry hands thoroughly with a single use towel.



11 Use towel to turn off the faucet.



4.5 GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS



- 1 Encourage use of video conference or other collaboration tools, as far as possible, for meetings and interactions with devotees & colleagues.



- 2 Do not come to temple if you experience flu-like symptoms - cough, cold, shortness of breath, running nose, fever, weakness or body-ache.



- 3 Inform your temple authority in the case that you or your family member is infected.



- 4 Seek immediate medical assistance at the nearest certified medical centre.



- 5 Except for seeking medical care, avoid contact with others, and stay home.



- 6 Follow the guidelines that will be implemented as part of the Safe Opening of Temples in your respective city and country.



5

SAFE RE-OPENING RESOURCES

A DIRECTORY FOR LEADERS

COVID-19 related Temple Re-opening Guide and tools for your ready reference (click on the hyperlink below):



GUIDE

[Temple Re-opening](#)



DECISION MAKING TOOL

[Tool for decision making in pursuit of re-opening](#)



WHO GUIDELINES

[COVID-19 Guidelines](#)

ISKCON Strategic Planning Support (SPS)



**HELPING YOU PLAN
ISKCON's FUTURE**

GUIDELINES FOR A
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