



TO ALL NATIONAL FEDERATIONS

Corsier-sur-Vevey, 4 March 2020 / bf/bs/cr

Information about COVID-19

Dear Colleagues,

There is currently a rapidly evolving worldwide outbreak of Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) disease, which originated in Wuhan, China, in December of 2019. After more than 90,000 reported cases of COVID-19 worldwide, there are still many unknowns and unanswered questions regarding this viral disease. In China, where the vast majority of cases and deaths have occurred, thus far, we know that 81% of people infected experienced only mild illness. Among the remainder of these patients, 14% have had more severe illness, including pneumonia, and 5% of patients have had critical illness, involving breathing difficulties and organ failure.

The death rate from this disease been estimated at between 2-4% in Wuhan, where the epidemic started, but only 0.7% in the remainder of China. What continues to be uncertain is how many people are not being counted in these statistics, because they experienced only minor symptoms (i.e. sore throat, running nose, etc.) and therefore did not seek professional medical evaluation and treatment. It has been clear that older people, those with pre-existing medical conditions (i.e. high blood pressure, heart disease, and diabetes mellitus), and patients with damaged or failing immune systems, appear to be more vulnerable. At this time we do not know why children, who are quite susceptible to many diseases, do not seem to be affected much by COVID-19.

Known Facts regarding COVID-19

1. Coronaviruses can be transmitted between animals and humans;
2. Typical **symptoms** of COVID-19 include running nose, cough, fever, fatigue and breathing difficulties (i.e. shortness of breath);
3. In the vast majority of people infected with COVID-19, the symptoms are not severe, and patients can be managed at home, without hospital care;
4. In more severe cases, the virus can cause pneumonia, Severe Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome, Organ Failure, and even death;
5. This disease is highly contagious, and it is very likely transmitted by droplet infection (i.e. being in proximity to an infected person, who coughs or sneezes), or touching surfaces or objects, which are in the environment of the infected person;
6. There is currently no available Antiviral or other medication, which has been shown to be effective in treating this illness, or which can expedite the recovery time from this disease. Even in hospitalized patients, only supportive care is available (i.e. Intravenous Hydration, medications to reduce fever and to alleviate pain, Respiratory Therapy treatments, etc.);
7. There is currently no vaccine available to prevent this infection, or to reduce the risk of becoming infected;
8. A vaccine is currently under development, but it is estimated that an effective vaccine for this disease will not become available for 12-18 months.

What can be done to lower your risk of becoming infected with COVID-19?

1. **Avoid close contact** with people who have, or appear to have an Acute Respiratory Illness;
2. Avoid unprotected contact with farm animals;



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3. If you are experiencing symptoms of an upper respiratory infection, practice “**cough etiquette**” (i.e. maintain distance from others, cover coughs and sneezes with a hand, flexed elbow or disposable tissue). Request others in your company to do the same;
4. **Wash your hands** frequently with either an alcohol-based gel or soap and water, especially after direct contact with ill people or their environment;
5. **Wear disposable nonsterile gloves** when touching potentially infectious materials.
6. The use of face masks is not advised for healthy or asymptomatic patients;
7. Patients, who experience upper respiratory symptoms, and then they develop any kind of respiratory difficulty (i.e. shortness of breath, chest pain etc.) are strongly advised to seek immediate, or very prompt, medical evaluation and treatment.
8. Avoid traveling to infected area.

Information for event organizers

In addition to the aforementioned, Event Organizers must refer to their **public authorities** about specific sanitary requirements as requested by national law/decreed.

In addition, Event organizers are invited to:

- Provide **information** and reminders in the competition venue about the above **basic precautions** (washing hands regularly, cover coughs/sneezes with a flexed elbow or disposable tissue, avoid touching eyes-nose-mouth)
- Provide alcohol-based gel dispensers in all areas and ensure facilitated access to bathrooms/soap
- Mats (warm-up area & competition) should be cleaned and disinfected before and after each session
- Doctors carrying out the daily medical examination should remain vigilant to any symptom as described by the WHO.

The medical community is currently monitoring and tracking this worldwide COVID-19 epidemic. We are very rapidly gaining new knowledge and a much better understanding of this Novel Coronavirus, and, as time passes, new information, will evolve, which will ultimately enable us to prevent this disease, as well as to more effectively treat patients who become infected with this virus.

The UWW Medical Commission will keep you apprised of any significant changes in the Guidelines and Recommendations, which are included in this letter.

Other useful links

- World Health Organization - Q&A on COVID-19: <https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses>
- IOC Scientific Department advices: <https://www.olympic.org/athlete365/well-being/ioc-medical-director-coronavirus-tokyo-2020/>

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