

Information for those who have lost their loved ones

Restrictive measures taken in response to Coronavirus COVID-19 epidemic

April 3, 2020

Dear Sir / Madam,

You have just lost one of your loved ones who deceased at our hospital. On behalf of all the staff of our institution, we beg you to accept our deepest condolences.

Exceptional measures must be taken in the special environment of the COVID-19 epidemic.

These measures must be strictly observed for the benefit of everyone in order to protect you from the contamination, to protect the medical staff from the epidemic and prevent the spread of the virus to the greatest possible extent.

At the present moment, the following measures are applied to the deceased persons. Some of them are applicable to all the deceased ones; others to only those, who are considered to have died with a confirmed or probable case of Covid-19.

Organisation of funeral for the deceased patients

Relatives of the deceased person must immediately take all necessary steps to designate a funeral operator who would organize the funeral procedure in the shortest possible delay. They should consequently inform the hospital administration and, first of all, the mortuary responsible officer about the designated funeral operator.

According to the regulations, the body should be immediately encased into a coffin; the procedure of the enclosure should be performed by the funeral operator at the mortuary.

If the hospital receives no insurance within 24 hours from the time of death, which would allow the funeral operator to complete the procedures, the funeral may be immediately organized by the prefectural authority at your expense.

Presence of the family members in the Care Units of the deceased person

- **For the families of deceased persons affected by Covid-19:**

According to the circumstances, the period of return of the deceased persons, affected or probably affected by Covid-19, to the families is considerably reduced in the care units and reserved for the closest relatives.

The family members must carefully observe the appropriate hygienic precautions, set forth by the nursing staff. They particularly must refrain from kissing the body of the deceased person and they should not approach the body within three feet. They must carefully disinfect their hands by hydroalcoholic solution when leaving the ward. Only one person can be admitted to the ward at a time.

The bodies of the deceased persons are returned to the relatives, who may have been present in the care unit, within at most two hours after the death; this period may be reduced, if required in view of the medical considerations.

We inform you that after the preparation for the issue, the body is encased into a coffin before transportation to the mortuary in compliance with the regulations applicable to this infectious disease.

- **For the families of the persons, who died from any other cause than Covid-19 infection:**

The bodies the deceased persons are returned to their families, provided that the barrier conditions are met, particularly, a distance of three feet between all the persons should be observed.

Presence of the family member in the mortuary rooms

- **For the families of the persons affected by Covid-19 :**

The bodies of the persons, who deceased or probably deceased with Covid-19, are not returned to their families.

During the funeral cortege, the relatives must respect the general barrier measures and keep the distance of at least one meter between each other.

- **For the families of deceased persons, who were not affected by Covid-19:**

On approval of the officer responsible for the mortuary, if the circumstances permit it, the body can be returned to the requesting relatives. However, the group of persons entitled to accept the body, should be limited by the closest relatives only.

The family members must respect the general barrier protection measures and keep the distance of at least one meter between each other. These provisions should also be applied during the funeral cortege.

Corpse preparation rituals and conservation procedure

The body conservation procedures (thanatopraxy) are prohibited in respect to the bodies of all deceased persons.

All procedures, including corpse preparation rituals, are forbidden in respect to the bodies of the persons, who presumably or probably deceased with Covid-19.

Body conservation procedures for those persons, who died from any other cause than Covid-19 infection, all the procedures, including preparation rituals, are authorized, given that the general barrier measures are duly respected.

Thank you for respecting these measures, which are important for all of us in this difficult period.

Please, accept our deepest condolences. You can count on us for any help and support.

General Administration of AP-HP

April 3, 2020