

21st March 2020

Effective immediately, the Eye Bank Association of India recommends that eye banks exclude/defer (rule out) potential donor for ocular tissue who met one or more of the following criteria :

1. Tested positive for or diagnosed with COVID -19.
2. Acute respiratory illness (fever 100.4°F (38°C) and at least one severe or common symptom of respiratory disease (e.g. unexplained fever, cough, shortness of breath, diarrhoea) with no other etiology that fully explains the clinical presentation.
3. Close contact with a person who has confirmed COVID-19 infection or with a person under Investigation (PUI).
4. Travel to or transit through a foreign country identified by the CDC as a level 3 travel risk **.
5. As India itself is a country where COVID pandemic is spreading with positive cases increasing by 50 per day and declared as level 2, donors residing or having traveled to or through areas with reported cases may be considered at risk. Each eye bank should monitor and consult local THOTA/NOTTO/ROTTA/SOTTO/State health authority/NPCB for daily or weekly reports.
6. ARDS, Pneumonia or pulmonary computed tomography (CT) scanning showing “ground glass opacities” (regardless of whether another organism is present)
7. Eye banks should document the risk assessment of the disease and ensure all staff are aware of the above.
8. EDC/Eye Recovery Technicians may be asked to be on call with limited movement in the Hospital.
9. Use long term media for preservation of corneas.

**The position on COVID-2019 is changing and developing, so there may be further changes to this advisory*

*** <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/map-and-travel-notice.html#travel-1>*

https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/situation-reports/20200319-sitrep-59-covid-19.pdf?sfvrsn=c3dcdef9_2

Advisory for Eye Bankers to be safe from COVID-19

- **Wash your hands frequently**
Regularly and thoroughly clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or wash them with soap and water
- **Put on, use, take off and dispose of personal protective equipments properly**
- **Maintain social distancing**
Maintain at least 1 metre (3 feet) distance between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing
- **Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth**
Hands touch many surfaces and can pick up viruses. Once contaminated, hands can transfer the virus to your eyes, nose or mouth
- **Practice respiratory hygiene**
Make sure you, and the people around you, follow good respiratory hygiene. This means covering your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze. Then dispose of the used tissue immediately.
- **If you have fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical care early**
Stay home if you feel unwell. If you have a fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical attention and call in advance
- **Wear mask all the times in Mortuary and Hospitals**
- **Cover your mouth/nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing. Use masks.**

