



The College of Otorhinolaryngologists & Head and Neck Surgeons of Sri Lanka (CORLHNS)

ENT Department, National Hospital of Sri Lanka, Regent Street, Colombo 10.

Phone: +94 114 933764

E mail: entsrilanka@gmail.com

web: www.entsrilanka.org

President

Dr. A.D.K.S.N.Yasawardene

Mobile: 0777356138

yasawardene@gmail.com

President-Elect

Dr.K.Y.S.Weerakkody

Mobile:0777303748

yasathweerakkody@yahoo.com

Secretary

Dr.D.A.D.G Daminda

Mobile: 0772065966

gnanapriyaent@yahoo.com

Treasurer

Dr.Amal Fernando

Mobile:0718089097

gimhanafdo@yahoo.com

Scientific Secretary

Dr.M.T.D.Lakshan

Mobile: 0713061919

lakshanent@gmail.com

Asst. Secretary

Dr.Sithara Dissanayake

0773669442

Social Secretary

Dr.K.D.R.A.Kirihene

0773775771

Co Editors

Dr.M.W.Zaffarulla

0777804315

Dr.Akram Drahaman

0775713156

Past President

Dr. A.S. Welandawe

0714428288

Past Secretary

Dr.J.M.R.G.Jayaweera

0772097807

Past Treasurer

Dr.K.D.R.A.Kirihene

0773775771

Committee Members

Dr. R.P.Dayasena

0777475338

Dr.C.Narampanawa

0777885066

Dr.D.D.Jayasekara

0772447862

Dr.Densil Indika

0717516568

26/03/2020

Message to the public by college of ENT surgeons of Sri Lanka

The college of Otolaryngologists (ENT Surgeons) of Sri Lanka would like to inform the public the impact of present COVID19 outbreak on care of ENT diseases.

The most ENT examinations (including simple throat examination to voice box examination) and most ENT procedures (endoscopies, surgeries) are recognized as aerosol generating procedures. Aerosol originating from a COVID19 infected patient can readily pass the infection to medical and other staff. If health care workers get infected they need to keep away from work resulting closure of units or entire hospitals. Moreover the infected health workers can spread the infection to other patients during pre-symptomatic period.

Because of these reasons most ENT academic organizations have recommended to avoid or postpone above mentioned procedures and if there is an urgency, to do those using full protection gear which are in short supply in many countries. Hence the public will notice that there will be a postponement of non-urgent ENT procedures and limited service at ENT clinics during this epidemic. However patients are welcome to call the hospitals and ENT doctors who are ready to advise them on future course of action.

Furthermore, it is very important to avoid certain home accidents related to Ear Nose Throat when you are staying home during lockdown period. For instance you need to be very careful when eating fish and meat to avoid bones getting stuck in the throat. This is especially relevant during feeding of children. Children should be looked after with utter most care to prevent accidental insertion of foreign bodies to ear nose and throat. Common foreign bodies are Toys with small parts, plastic beads, coins, hair pins and seeds. Please keep these away from children during this difficult period. At no time children should be allowed to play with button batteries as these can cause extensive tissue damage if inserted to ear nose throat. Children less than three years should not be given nuts and other hard foods to eat as these can get aspirated to airway causing an emergency.



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People who use artificial dentures should be careful to prevent accidental swallowing of those. Please look after the children playing at home to avoid falls and other injuries. Any of the above accidents need a visit to the hospital where you will face delays and screening before the treatment. Please note that the prevention of above accidents will save much needed hospital resources and time of health staff. Hence please be vigilant and take all the precautions to prevent these accidents while you and your family are staying at home.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

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Dr. A.D.K.S.N. Yasawardene,
Consultant ENT Surgeon
President – CORLHNS