

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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What is a coronavirus?

Coronaviruses are large groups of viruses that are common amongst animals. These viruses can make people sick, usually with a mild to moderate upper respiratory tract illness, similar to flu. A new coronavirus called COVID-19 was identified in China and is associated with an outbreak of viral pneumonia. What is COVID-19? COVID-19 is the new infectious disease caused by the most recently discovered coronavirus. This new virus and disease were unknown before the outbreak began in Wuhan, China, in December 2019.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Mild to severe respiratory illness with

- fever
 - cough – usually dry
 - fatigue
 - myalgia (sore muscles/ body)
 - difficulty breathing
- Note that a sore throat and runny nose tend to be less common in COVID-19 than in flu or other upper respiratory tract infections.

When am I considered to have COVID-19?

People will be suspected to have the COVID-19 virus if: They have flu-like symptoms and in the last 14 days have Travelled internationally to an area where COVID-19 is spreading from person-to-person in the community OR Been in close contact (e.g. face-to-face contact, been in a closed room, transport) with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 OR Has a household member or someone at work who has tested positive for COVID-19 OR Has worked in a facility where a COVID-19 case/s has been diagnosed and was not wearing personal protective equipment OR Has travelled to an area where COVID-19 is spreading from person-to-person in the community [include this last criterion should local transmission be confirmed] Affected areas are updated daily by NICD: <http://www.nicd.ac.za/diseases-a-z-index/covid-19/dailyupdates-of-countries/> Plain Language Definition: You should suspect you have COVID-19 if you have a flu-like illness and have travelled to an area where COVID-19 is spreading from person-to-person in the community OR had close contact with a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19.

How does COVID-19 spread?

The COVID-19 spreads mainly via respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Through close personal contact such as touching or shaking hands. Touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose or eyes before washing your hands. Because the virus is spread through the air it is important to stay more than 1-2 meters (3-6 feet) away from a person who is sick. How do I protect myself? You can reduce your chances of being infected or spreading COVID-19 by taking some simple precautions:

- Regularly and thoroughly wash your hands with soap and water or clean your hands with an alcoholbased hand rub for at least 20 seconds. Wash hands often, especially before handling food/ after using toilet or coughing/ sneezing.
- Cover your cough or sneeze in the bend of elbow or with a tissue, once used throw away and wash your hands.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Wearing a mask is unlikely to protect you if you are well. People who are coughing and sneezing who wear a mask (surgical mask fine, N95 not necessary) are less likely to infect others.
- Stay home if you feel unwell.

I have flu-symptoms and have recently travelled, what should I do? How do I go about getting a test? Should you develop flu-like symptoms after visiting a country or area where COVID-19 is spreading from person-to-person in the community OR had close contact with a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19 stay calm. Remember even if you do have COVID-19 most people have a mild illness. It's important to seek care in a way that prevents you from spreading it to others:

- If you have access to private healthcare call your general doctor/ local health facility or NICD Hotline on 0800 029 999. Explain your symptoms and where you have travelled or with whom you have had contact.
- If you use public healthcare call your local health facility or NICD Hotline on 0800 029 999. You will receive advice on what to do. If you are unable to make a call, go to your local facility. Before you enter the facility alert staff that you are concerned you have COVID-19. Expect to be asked to put on a facemask. You will be asked to wait separately from other patients until a health worker can help you. Should you develop difficulty breathing seek care urgently. If possible, call ahead to your local health facility to inform them you are en route.