



PUBLIC ADVISORY - SADC SECRETARIAT

Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) advice for the public

There is an increasing concern worldwide in the face of the spread of the coronavirus, which has killed about 132 people in China and infected people in the United States, Australia, Canada, France, Japan and South Korea. This advisory is issued so that the SADC Secretariat staff and the public in SADC Member States can understand the basic tenets of how to identify the symptoms of the disease, the mode of contamination and the precautionary measures to apply?

The new Coronavirus appeared at the end of December in the city of Wuhan, in central China and is related to the SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) virus that caused fatal epidemics worldwide in the 90's. It is called "novel" because it's new, not known to humans until the first case was identified in China. Considering that this virus is new, there is still more to learn on how it affects the people who are sick with it, how they can be treated, and what countries can do to respond to it. Current estimates of the incubation period of the virus range from 2-10 days. The transmission is essentially from humans to humans, through air droplets (coughing, sneezing, contact with contaminated objects and surfaces).

Understanding the time when infected patients may transmit the virus to others is critical for control efforts. Detailed epidemiological information from more people infected is needed to determine the infectious period of 2019-nCoV, in particular whether transmission can occur from asymptomatic individuals or during the incubation period.

What are the symptoms of the 2019-nCoV?

The coronavirus is a respiratory virus. The main symptoms are **fever, flu-like syndrome, headache, pain in the joints and muscles** at first. Secondly, respiratory signs may appear with **cough, sputum and shortness of breath**, or **pneumonia** which can be severe and lead to **death**.

Since the symptoms of the 2019-nCoV are similar to those of the common-cold (flu-like) virus, the concern should be whether the affected person has travelled to countries that have an active outbreak of the Corona virus (e.g. China) or has been in contact with an infected person, essentially someone who has travelled to China and has developed the symptoms described above. Like any other viral illness, this virus is more fatal in people with reduced immunity (HIV patients, the elderly etc.) than in those with good health.

How to prevent the spread of 2019-nCoV – General precautionary measures

- Avoiding close contact with people suffering from acute respiratory infections.
- Frequent hand-washing, especially after direct contact with ill people or their environment.
- Avoiding unprotected contact with farm or wild animals.
- People with symptoms of acute respiratory infection should practice cough etiquette (maintain distance, cover coughs and sneezes with disposable tissues or clothing, and wash hands).

Within healthcare facilities, enhance standard infection prevention and control practices in hospitals, especially in emergency departments.

Individual precautions

- Basic hygiene precautions such hand washing must be observed at all time. After coughing, sneezing or caring for sick people.
- Cover nose and mouth when coughing and sneezing with tissue or flexed elbow. Dispose the tissue in a closed bin.
- Avoid close contact with anyone with common cold or flu-like symptoms
- A person with a history of recent stay in China with fever and flu-like symptoms must be treated as potentially infectious
- Avoid unprotected contacts with wild animals

Institutional/Member states precautionary measures

- Identify, isolate and care for patients early, including providing optimized care for infected patients, this include a mandatory fever screening at point of entry and isolation as necessary.
- Identify and reduce transmission from the animal source;
- Communicate critical risk and event information to all communities and counter misinformation; Minimize social and economic impact through multisectoral partnerships.
- Preventing further international spread from China

Travel recommendations

WHO does not recommend any specific health measures for travellers. In case of symptoms suggestive of respiratory illness either during or after travel, the travellers are encouraged to seek medical attention and share their travel history with their health care provider. Travel guidance was updated on 24 January.

WHO is providing guidance on early investigations, which are critical to carry out early in an outbreak of a new virus. The data collected from the study protocols can be used to refine recommendations for surveillance and case definitions, to characterize the key epidemiological transmission features of 2019-nCoV, help understand spread, severity, spectrum of disease, impact on the community and to inform operational models for implementation of countermeasures such as case isolation, contact tracing and isolation.

HOW TO REDUCE THE RISK OF INFECTION

Reduce your risk of **coronavirus** infection:



Clean hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub

Cover nose and mouth when coughing and sneezing with tissue or flexed elbow



Avoid close contact with anyone with cold or flu-like symptoms

Thoroughly cook meat and eggs



Avoid unprotected contact with live wild or farm animals



World Health Organization

Protect yourself and others from getting sick

Wash your hands



- after coughing or sneezing
- when caring for the sick
- before, during and after you prepare food
- before eating
- after toilet use
- when hands are visibly dirty
- after handling animals or animal waste



World Health Organization

Protect others from getting sick

Cover mouth and nose with tissue, sleeve or elbow when coughing or sneezing



Throw tissue into closed bin after use

Clean hands after coughing or sneezing and when caring for the sick



World Health Organization

Protect yourself from getting sick

Avoid unprotected contact with sick people (including touching one's eyes, nose or mouth) and with live farm or wild animals



World Health Organization

Practise food safety

Sick animals and animals that have died of diseases **should not be eaten**



World Health Organization

Practise food safety

Even in areas experiencing outbreaks, meat products can be safely consumed if these items are **cooked thoroughly and properly handled** during food preparation.



World Health Organization

STAY HEALTHY WHILE TRAVELLING

Avoid travel if you have a fever and cough



If you have a fever, cough and difficulty breathing seek medical care early and share previous travel history with your health care provider



STAY HEALTHY WHILE TRAVELLING

Avoid close contact with people suffering from a fever and cough



Frequently clean hands by using alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water

Avoid touching eyes, nose or mouth



STAY HEALTHY WHILE TRAVELLING

When coughing and sneezing cover mouth and nose with flexed elbow or tissue – throw tissue away immediately and wash hands



If you choose to wear a face mask, be sure to cover mouth and nose - avoid touching mask once it's on

Immediately discard single-use mask after each use and wash hands after removing masks



STAY HEALTHY WHILE TRAVELLING

If you become sick while travelling, inform crew and seek medical care early



If you seek medical attention, share travel history with your health care provider



STAY HEALTHY WHILE TRAVELLING

Eat only well-cooked food



Avoid spitting in public

Avoid close contact and travel with animals that are sick

