



Republic of Zambia  
Ministry of Health

## Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)

### FACT SHEET

#### 1. What is Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)?

The Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) is a respiratory disease caused by a new Coronavirus. The virus causes a respiratory illness similar to a common cold and in most cases is mild. In severe cases it can lead to pneumonia, kidney failure and result in death. The virus was identified in China in 2019 and has since been spreading to other countries including Zambia.

#### 2. Signs and symptoms

Patients who are infected with the disease show a wide range of symptoms. These include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Difficulty in breathing
- Headache
- Sneezing
- Sore throat

#### 3. How long does it take to get sick after being infected?

It takes between 1-14 days for a person to get sick following infection with Coronavirus.

#### 4. How it spreads

The disease is mainly spread from person to person.

A person can get the disease through:

- Close contact with an infected person
- Touching an object or surface contaminated with the virus and then touching the eyes, mouth or nose
- Air droplets dispersed by an infected person through coughing and sneezing

#### 5. Who is at risk of contracting COVID-19?

**Everyone** is at risk of getting the virus. Some groups are at a higher risk than others:

- Anybody in close contact with an infected person
- Travelers
- Workers at points of entry into the country
- People with existing chronic health conditions
- Elderly people

#### 6. What measures can a person take to prevent COVID-19?

To slow the spread of COVID-19 it's important to take the following preventive measures:

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Avoid close contact with other people
- Social distancing
  - a. Maintain a distance of at least 1–2 meters from other people
  - b. Stay at home
  - c. Avoid close contact with persons who have flu symptoms
- Avoid handshakes
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands
- When coughing or sneezing cover mouth and nose with a flexed elbow or tissue paper. Throw tissue in a bin and wash hands.
- Avoid spitting in public
- Avoid non-essential travel

- Health care workers must practice standard infection prevention measures
- Health care workers must isolate and care for every confirmed case of COVID-19 in designated places.
- Use face mask
  - a. Disposable mask (dispose off in a bin after use)
  - b. Reusable mask (wash and iron before the next use)
- Self-quarantine for 14 days after International travel, if you develop symptoms contact the Call Centre on 909



### 7. What does self-quarantine mean?

It is isolating oneself as much as possible. It is staying away from other people for 14 days period after the date of departure from abroad or being in contact with an infected person with COVID-19. This entails:

- Stay in your room and isolate yourself ( do not go for work, shopping, School, attend social or religious gatherings) until 14 days after your departure from the country you visited.
- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use alcohol hand sanitizers
- Avoid sharing household items- do not share plates, drinking glasses, towels and beddings until the 14 days period of self quarantine is over
- Cover your nose and mouth with a flexed elbow or a tissue every time you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in a bin or designated place and immediately wash your hands with soap and water
- In Zambia, it is **mandatory** to quarantine anyone coming from abroad for 14 days in Government designated places.

### 8. Is there treatment available for COVID-19?

There is no specific treatment for COVID-19. If you suspect the signs and symptoms of COVID-19, seek medical advice by contacting the call centers on the numbers indicated below.

### 9. Is there a vaccine for COVID-19?

There is currently no vaccine to protect against COVID-19. The best way to prevent infection is to follow the recommended preventive measures.

### 10. Contacts and Contact Tracing

A **contact** is any person who has been exposed to a person who is suspected to have COVID-19 or to a person who is suffering or has died from the disease.

**Contact tracing** is the identification and follow-up of persons who may have come into contact with an infected person. Contacts are monitored for the maximum incubation period of COVID-19, which is 14 days. If they become sick, they will be quickly isolated and treated.

Contact tracing is important because it can stop the disease from spreading as it helps find the people who were in contact with an infected person and ask them to do self quarantine.

- Contact tracing of every contact is essential to control and stop the outbreak.
- If you are a contact, cooperate with contact tracers. Do not lie to them. You are being followed to protect yourself and others.
- All contacts will be followed every day for 14 days.

### 11. What should you do if you suspect that you or someone else has COVID-19

If you suspect the signs and symptoms of COVID-19, seek medical advice by contacting the call centers on the numbers indicated below.

**0974 493553 | 0953 898941 | 0964 638726**  
**TOLL FREE LINE: 909**

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