Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

What you need to know?

Department of Health
March 2020
Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) causes COVID-19

- SARS-CoV-2 is a new virus.
- The first cases were identified in people with pneumonia in Wuhan, China, in late December 2019.
- It probably started in animals but is now spreading between people.
- As this virus is new, we are learning more all the time, and what we know now may change.
The virus has spread to many countries through travel

• WHO has declared the situation a ‘pandemic’, which means there are multiple countries reporting spread within their countries.

• Basic precautions can prevent the disease from spreading in Seychelles, and stop an outbreak.
How is it spread?

Covid 19 spreads from person to person like colds and flu.

- Through **droplets** which are created when we talk, cough and sneeze.

- People can get infected when these droplets enter the nose, eyes or mouth.

- Touching **contaminated objects** and surfaces puts the droplets onto your hands. **If you touch your face** the droplets can enter your nose / eyes / mouth.
Symptoms start like many other illnesses

- Symptoms start 2 to 14 days after exposure to an ill person.
- Some people have no symptoms, **most** have a mild illness. But it can be severe and sometimes fatal.
Diagnosis and treatment

• Because symptoms are similar to many other illnesses, **tests are needed to make the diagnosis** (throat swab, blood test).

• There is **no specific treatment**.

• Mild symptoms can be treated with medicine to lower the fever, or relieve pain.

• If symptoms are more severe, treatment in hospital is required.
To prevent COVID-19

• **Maintain good personal hygiene**
  • Wash your hands frequently with soap and water.
  • Use alcohol-based hand sanitiser when soap and water are not readily available.
  • Cover your coughs and sneezes. Use a tissue or your upper sleeve. Immediately throw the tissue in a bin and wash your hands.

• **Anyone who has any symptoms even if only mild should stay home and seek medical advice.**
Steps in Handwashing (WHO)
Avoid exposure

• **Avoid touching your face** (eyes, nose and mouth) – especially if you have touched objects handled by many people (such as handrails, door handles).

• **Do not share food, drinks and personal items.**
Avoid exposure

• Keep away from people who are sick – don’t let them cough or sneeze on you.

• Avoid activities which expose you to large groups of people.

• When in public areas, as much as possible, keep 1-2 metres distance from sick people.
After any travel

- Monitor your health.
- **Seek medical attention if you develop symptoms** by telephoning your local clinic or the 141 Hotline.
- If advised to come to clinic, consider wearing a mask, use private transport and avoid contact with others as much as possible.
- Ensure you provide your travel history to the medical facility.
What to do if you get sick?

• **Do not travel.**

• **Cover your coughs and sneezes** – use a tissue or a mask if available – and **wash your hands with soap and water.**

• **Call your clinic** – let the doctor know if you have travelled recently, and if you were in contact with someone who is sick.

• **Do not go to work. Avoid public places.** Minimise contact with other people until you have recovered.
Screening and contact tracing

• Is important to stop the spread of the virus.
• “Screening” will be done at entry points to detect sick people. You may be asked where you have been, and your temperature may be taken.
• Health authorities may perform “contact tracing” – identifying people who have been in contact with someone suspected of having COVID-19.
• These ‘contacts’, even if well, may be asked to be in quarantine for 14 days, and monitored for development of symptoms.
• Follow the advice of health authorities.
What are Isolation and Quarantine?

**Quarantine**
• A public health practice used to separate and restrict the movement of well persons who may have been exposed to a communicable disease to see if they become ill.

**Isolation**
• A public health practice to separate ill persons who have a communicable disease from those who are healthy.
When to use masks?

• **Healthy people don’t need to wear masks.**

• **Wear a mask if:**
  • You are *coughing or sneezing.*
  • You are *caring for a sick person at home or in healthcare setting.*
  • Masks alone don’t protect – they should be used *along with other hygiene* measures like regular hand washing.
Misinformation is a major problem

• New virus – people do not know everything about it – so there are many **rumours**, usually wrong, due to **fear and panic**.

• Spread on **misinformation may make people panic or follow the wrong precautions**, increasing their risk of getting infected and/or spreading the infection.

• For reliable advice, contact the Department of Health on **141 Hotline** or your **local health centre via 4388000**.

• Follow the **Department of Health** Facebook page.

• The **World Health Organisation** is another reliable source of advice on the Covid 19 workplace.
Thank you.

Questions?
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