



NAMDEB

Medical Aid Scheme

◆ DEBMARINE NAMIBIA | ◆ NDTIC | ◆ NAMDEB



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General Announcement of Scheme coverage of Covid-19 virus

BACKGROUND:

Namdeb Medical Aid Scheme is fully committed to providing and supporting our membership with information on the outbreak of the Coronavirus. The outbreak has been declared a pandemic by the World Health Organisation (WHO). The Namibian Government has also taken drastic measures to manage the pandemic and to counter the impact of the outbreak on the country, and on all Namibians and visitors to the country. Thus, Namibia, like in the rest of the world, is treating the pandemic with great caution.

The Namdeb Scheme, like all other medical aid funds, is guided by the Ministry of Health & Social Services (MoHSS), and has prepared educational information and other supportive communications. We await the National guidelines and protocols of Namibia, and the MoHSS is preparing the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) that we all have to follow. The pandemic is further classified as a “notifiable disease”, and in terms of legislation, everybody has to follow national guidelines and report all cases of the Corona or Covid-19 virus.

To date, there is no specific medicine recommended to prevent or treat the Coronavirus, but internationally there are tests being done on possible new medication and/or existing medication for other illness conditions that may assist in treating Coronavirus. The world is eagerly awaiting news in the regard. For now, the best for all of us is to take precautionary measures to limit the spread, and that the positive cases of Covid-19 should receive appropriate care to relieve and treat symptoms. Furthermore, those with severe illnesses should receive optimized supportive care in hospital. There are firm guidelines and dedicated protocols to follow in all cases with positive test results, such as people are to be placed in isolation and/or ICU care.

As part of the international guidelines and Namibian protocols, the treatment of the pandemic must be done in a coordinated and structured way. The medical aid industry was informed that all serious cases that should require hospitalization will be done at the dedicated isolation facilities. Furthermore, pathology tests for the Covid-19 virus are only done by accredited pathology laboratories and your GP will refer you when he/she do the specimen sampling and completed the required screening questionnaire. All cases referred for laboratory tests, positive or negative have to be registered through the National Call Center and in line with the Standard Operating Procedures of the Ministry of Health.

PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN CURE:

If you want to protect yourself and your family from getting infected, you should maintain basic hand hygiene, safe food practices and avoid close contact with large groups of people, or anyone showing symptoms of flu, coughing and sneezing. Please practice the safe distancing guidelines and keep to the announced lock down policies.

Amongst others, the following is good advice to follow:

1. Regular hand washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use hand sanitizer with an alcohol content of at least 60%.
2. Do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands if in contact with sick people or with potentially infected surfaces or objects,
3. Covering mouth and nose with a disposable tissue or cloth when coughing or sneezing,
4. Avoid close contact with anyone showing symptoms of respiratory illness such as coughing and sneezing, keep a distance of one step (meter),
5. Avoid public gatherings or gatherings of more than 10 people,
6. Members and their family should seek immediate treatment if infection is suspected or if symptoms occur (severe flu-like illness),

Should you or any member of your family have a fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical care immediately to reduce the risk of developing a more severe infection or unknowingly spreading the virus. Some practices are not accepting patients with symptoms anymore. However, Namdeb Medical Scheme does provide for telephone consultations which allows you to consult with your medical practitioner telephonically.

Your doctor and/or yourself, when referred to register the case through the National Call Center (0800100100), will complete a pre-test screening questionnaire. Amongst other information, it will ask for your recent travel history, if you were in contact with any person who may have been infected with the virus i.e. with recent travel to any foreign country with a high infection rate in the past 14 or 30 days, or contact with a person who is reported to be infected and other.

The MoHSS advises the general public to adhere to the following measures as part of prevention:

Other sources for more information:

1. Consultation with local healthcare provider community.
2. Ministry of Health communications i.e. press statement on the Novel Corona Virus Outbreak in China, 22 January 2020 (061 2032054 or 2032423/2150).
3. World Health Organization (WHO) <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>
4. His Excellency, President of Namibia public announcements and declaration of emergency and lock down of the Khomas & Erongo regions and we have to adhere to the rules set.
5. Doctors warned against prescribing unproven medication for Covid-19 <https://www.health24.com/Medical/Infectious-diseases/Coronavirus/doctors-warned-against-prescribing-unproven-medication-for-covid-19-20200401>

The Namdeb Scheme will cover for:

1. All pathology tests that are done in accordance with the prescribed clinical protocols, which will be paid from the member's day-to-day benefits for pathology.
2. All precautionary medications like vitamins and self-medication are carried in terms of the benefits structure of the respective Option to which the member belongs.
3. There are no preventative medication and or cure available as yet and the Scheme will cover only medication prescribed by your treating practitioner, that are duly registered at the Medicine Regulatory Control Council (NMRC) of Namibia. Stringent warnings are out that patients should be warned against prescription of unproven medication for Covid-19!
4. In terms of the provisions of the 'Notifiable Disease Act', a National Pandemic treatment protocol states that all positive cases have to be reported to the Ministry of Health & Social Services (MoHSS). **The contact number for the National Call Center is: 0800100100**
5. Failing to report it is a punishable offence in terms of the provision of legislation.
6. At this point, all treatment costs are covered under the provisions set by the MoHSS.
7. The member and registered family members will continue to access all other benefits as normal for any other chronic illnesses, chronic medication, etc.

When in doubt, kindly contact your closest Prosperity Health Client Service Office for clarity or more detail. Further updates will follow from time to time.

Take care!



Callie Schäfer
Principal Officer