



NAMDEB

Medical Aid Scheme

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NAMDEB NEWSLETTER

30 March 2020

COVID - 19

The coronavirus outbreak the first coronavirus (COVID-19) cases were reported in early December 2019 in the central Chinese city of Wuhan. On 30 January 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak a “public health emergency of international concern”. As of 30 March 2020, more than 724 201 confirmed cases have been reported worldwide and 11 cases have been confirmed in Namibia.

While it is suspected that the initial COVID-19 epidemic started through animal-to-human transmission, the current epidemic is being fuelled by human-to-human transmission.

How is the virus spread?

- Most people are infected from other people
- Coronaviruses are spread through aerosol droplets which are expelled when an infected individual coughs or sneezes within a range of about 1.8m.
- These droplets can contaminate surfaces like door handles or railings. Although coronavirus droplets only stay suspended in the air for a short time, they may remain contagious on surfaces for a few hours.
- Touching contaminated objects puts the droplets onto your hands.
- If you touch your face the droplets can enter your nose, eyes or mouth.

Who is at risk and what are the risk factors for acquiring the infection?

Risk factors include:

- Individuals with a recent travel history
- History of exposure to individuals infected with COVID-19
- Individuals with pre-existing conditions, such as diabetes mellitus, asthma, cancer and other immunosuppressive conditions like pregnancy.
- Individuals over the age of 50 years
- Children
- Smokers

What are the symptoms?

The signs of infection include fever, dry cough, shortness of breath, and breathing difficulties. In more severe cases, it can lead to pneumonia, kidney failure and even death. The incubation period (the period between exposure to the virus and the appearance of the first symptoms) is between 10 - 14 days.

Infected patients can also be asymptomatic, meaning they do not display any of the symptoms above, despite having the virus in their systems.

Diagnosis of coronavirus infection:

Your doctor or healthcare practitioner will ask you questions about your symptoms, people you have recently interacted with, any history of travel, your work and home environments.

A blood test or respiratory specimen test (including sputum, saliva, etc.) may be done to confirm the diagnosis. Infection with COVID-19 is diagnosed in the laboratory. Results are generally available within a few hours to a few days. Additional specimen types such as stool or urine may be collected and stored as well.

How to prevent Coronavirus infection?

To prevent the spread of the COVID-19, global authorities, including WHO and the Ministry of Health, recommend good practice of hand hygiene (hand washing with soap and water), cough etiquette, and adhering to the following:

- Frequent hand-washing.
- Social distancing
- Individuals with symptoms of acute respiratory infection should practice cough etiquette (maintain distance, cover coughs and sneezes with disposable tissues or clothing and wash hands thoroughly).

Suspected Cases:

- A patient with acute respiratory illness (fever and at least one sign or symptom of respiratory disease (e.g. cough, shortness of breath) AND with no other aetiology that fully explains the clinical presentation AND a history of travel to or residence in a country/area or territory reporting local transmission of COVID-19 during the 14 days prior to symptom onset

OR

- A patient with any acute respiratory illness AND having been in contact with a confirmed or probable COVID-19 case in the last 14 days prior to symptom onset

OR

- A patient with any acute respiratory illness AND requiring hospitalization AND with no other aetiology that fully explains the clinical presentation.

Who should be tested for COVID-19?

- Only persons who meet the “Suspected Case Definition”

All individuals with suspected COVID-19 infection should:

- Perform hand hygiene frequently, particularly washing hands thoroughly with soap and water. If this is not possible using alcohol-based antiseptic hand rub is an alternate option;
- Keep distance from well individuals as much as possible (at least 1 meter);
- Wear a medical mask that should be provided to the individual and be worn as much as possible, if it can be tolerated to contain respiratory secretions. For individuals who cannot tolerate a medical mask, he/ she should rigorously apply respiratory hygiene, i.e. cover mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing with disposable paper tissue. Dispose of the material after use. Clean hands immediately after contact with respiratory secretions;
- Improve airflow in living space by opening windows and doors as much as possible.

Management of individuals with suspected COVID-19 infection centers on prompt diagnosis and notification, categorisation of disease (mild, moderate, severe), prevention of spread as well as supportive care.

In all cases, hospitalisation with isolation or quarantining of all infected individuals and treatment with anti-viral medications are indicated.

Medical Aid Scheme Payment for Covid-19 screening

It is herewith confirmed that Namdeb Medical Scheme will pay for the screening of Covid-19 provided that you were referred by a medical practitioner and meet the protocol guidelines, which have been setup by the Ministry of Health and Social Services. In this regard, you are advised to either phone your doctor, should you have any flu-like symptoms, and they will then advise you what to do.

Any tests paid by the medical scheme will be covered from the members' day-to-day pathology benefits.