

UNIVERSITY OF DAR ES SALAAM
DIRECTORATE OF PUBLIC SERVICES
COVID 19 INFORMATIONS DESK
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is Coronavirus Disease?

Coronavirus describes a family of viruses that can affect humans and animals. This family of viruses is responsible for the common cold, as well as more severe diseases such as SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome) and MERS (Middle East respiratory syndrome).

The current coronavirus has been named “SARS-CoV-2.” The illness the virus causes is COVID-19.

What is COVID 19?

COVID 19 stands for “coronavirus disease 2019.” COVID-19 is the name of the disease, not the virus. This specific virus has not been seen by humans before, and therefore our immune system is not able to mount a response as quickly or effectively.

Who is at common risk for COVID 19?

People who have been in contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 are at an increased risk of infection and disease. In addition, healthcare workers have an increased risk of acquiring infection in the workplace. The elderly and individuals with respiratory conditions, such as heart disease high blood pressure, chronic respiratory diseases, cancer and diabetes), have been found to be at a higher risk of severe illness and mortality associated with COVID-19.

How is COVID 19 transmitted?

The transmission of the virus is via respiratory droplets. When a person infected with COVID-19 coughs or sneezes, they release droplets of infected fluid. Larger droplets fall on nearby surfaces such as tables or seats. If you touch these surfaces the virus may transfer to your hands, then to mouth, nose or eyes when you touch your face.

Who should be tested for COVID 19?

People who develop symptoms of respiratory illness including cough, sore throat, fever and shortness of breath should seek medical care early. Additional groups who are at risk include contacts of a confirmed case as well as healthcare workers in facilities where COVID-19 patients are being treated or where people are admitted to hospital with pneumonia of unknown cause.

What are the symptoms and signs of COVID 19?

Current symptoms reported for patients with COVID-19 have included mild to severe respiratory illness with any or all of the following:

- Fever
- Cough
- Fatigue
- Shortness of breath
- Muscle pain
- Sore joints
- Headache
- Anxieties
- Sore throat
- Loss of sense of smell
- Loss of sense of taste.

How is COVID 19 Diagnosed?

COVID-19 is diagnosed by a laboratory test. This test detects the SARS-CoV-2 genetic material.

How is COVID 19 treated?

Treatment is supportive (e.g. provide oxygen for patients with shortness of breath or treatment for fever). There is no specific antiviral treatment available.

What can I do to prevent infections?

Currently there is no vaccine for COVID-19. There are no specific measures currently recommended to prevent COVID-19 but the following can provide protection against infection with coronaviruses and many other viruses that are more common:

- Practice physical distancing, this means keeping a physical distance of at least 2 metres from all people you interact with, specifically when out in public. This keeps you safe from respiratory droplets.
- Practice social distancing, this means not interacting with people outside of your household unless necessary.
- The use of mask may help protect you and people around you. Please look at the recommendation for these masks.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer (at least 70% alcohol).
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a flexed elbow or a tissue, then throw the tissue in the bin.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay at home when you are sick and try and keep distance from others at home.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

