

24th March 2020| PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY TO NIGERIANS ON CORONAVIRUS DISEASE (#7)

The novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) is a new strain of the virus that has not been previously identified in humans. SARS-CoV-2 is the virus that causes coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

This is an updated advisory on the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). This advisory will be updated frequently to reflect new information and research emerging on the disease and its impact on populations.

The Federal Ministry of Health through the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) has activated a national Emergency Operations Centre at the highest level and is leading the national response. National Rapid Response Teams have been deployed to support affected state governments with response activities. The Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) is also working closely with the state governments of all affected states to carry out contact tracing.

Several measures have been instituted by the Presidential Task Force on COVID-19 together with the Federal Ministry of Health to curtail the spread of the disease and protect the health of Nigerians. In line with this, the Federal Government of Nigeria has issued a ban on all international flights effective from the 23rd of March 2020 with the exception of emergency and essential flights for an initial period of time. Directives have also been issued at national and state level, to cancel large gatherings including religious gatherings, schools, events etc. As the Task Force continues to review response activities, more preventive measures may be instituted by the Federal and State Government in the coming days as the situation demands.

Currently, there are five laboratories in NCDC's molecular laboratory network with the capacity to test for COVID-19 in Nigeria. These laboratories are sufficiently equipped with reagents and supplies for testing.

An intensive communications campaign has begun to provide regular updates and accurate information to Nigerians on protecting themselves. The NCDC has also launched a communication campaign themed #TakeResponsibility. This is a call to all Nigerians and residents in the country to join forces and to be proactive in taking greater individual and collective responsibility in preventing and controlling the spread of COVID-19 in Nigeria. Real-time updates on new cases and resources that have been developed by the NCDC can be found on www.covid19.ncdc.gov.ng.

TRAVEL ADVICE

Nigerians are strongly advised against non-essential travel. All travelers who have returned to Nigeria in the last 14 days are required to self-isolate for 14 days even if they are not showing symptoms. The NCDC has disseminated information on the practice of self-isolation and this is available on www.covid19.ncdc.gov.ng.

The NCDC is also working with the Nigerian Customs Services to enhance surveillance at land borders to prevent further importation of the disease. The Federal Ministry of Health is working with Nigerian

Customs Service and Nigeria Immigration Service to ensure surveillance at land and sea borders. Ships coming in through the seaports are also subjected to mandatory health screening and clearance by Port Health Services, especially ships that sailed from high-risk ports, have been at sea for less than 14 days or that have crew members who are ill.

TRAVELLERS TO NIGERIA

- Travelers without symptoms on departure who become unwell in transit should self-report immediately to the Port Health Services on arrival
- All travelers returning to Nigeria from any country must self-isolate for 14 days, whether symptomatic or not. If symptoms develop during self-isolation:
 - Call the NCDC 24/7 toll-free line IMMEDIATELY on 080097000010
 - Avoid self-medication
 - Avoid contact with people

Travelers from Nigeria to other countries are advised to avoid contact with sick people.

ADVICE FOR HEALTH WORKERS

Healthcare workers are always advised to observe standard infection prevention and control measures when attending to patients and take a travel history. All health workers are strongly advised to maintain a high index of suspicion for COVID-19. Health officials are advised to call 07032864444 for sample transportation and related advice if you have a case that fits the national case definition.

ADVICE FOR BUSINESSES

Some state governments have issued directives for the closure of offices and advised workers to work from home. Various additional measures may be instituted. For now:

- Businesses are advised to circulate NCDC's public health advisory and related materials on COVID-19 to all employees, clients and visitors
- Ensure the provision of facilities for hand washing and access to an alcohol-based sanitizer, emphasising the importance of hand hygiene
- Mandate 14-day self-isolation for staff who have recently returned from outside Nigeria
- Encourage sick employees to stay at home
- Ensure routine cleaning of high-contact areas such as toilets, door handles, telephones etc.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

To reduce the risk of spread of COVID-19, members of the public are advised to adhere to the following measures:

1. Wash your hands frequently with soap under running water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based sanitiser if water is not available.
2. Avoid close contact with anyone showing symptoms of respiratory illness. Maintain at least 2 metres (5 feet) distance between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing repeatedly

3. Cover your mouth and nose properly with a tissue paper when sneezing and/or coughing. Dispose of the tissue properly immediately after use. You may also cough into your elbow if a tissue is not available.
4. Obey national and state directives requesting the cancellation and avoidance of large gatherings, including places of worship, social and sporting events
5. Do not mingle with people or congregate if you feel unwell with symptoms like fever, cough, sneezing or difficulty breathing.

ABOUT CORONAVIRUS DISEASE (COVID-19)

COVID-19 appears to cause mild to severe respiratory symptoms like fever, cough and difficulty breathing. From current evidence, about 80 persons out of 100 persons with the disease will recover. In about 10-15% of cases, it will cause a severe illness. It appears that death is not a common outcome and occurs mostly in elderly patients with underlying health issues.

There is no specific treatment yet for COVID-19. However, many of the symptoms can be treated. Treatment is based on the patient's clinical condition but supportive care for infected persons can be highly effective.

ABOUT NCDC

The Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) is the government agency with the mandate to lead the prevention, detection, and control of communicable diseases. Its functions are to prevent, detect, investigate and control communicable diseases of national and international public health importance.

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