



## WHAT IS CORONA VIRUS ?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses which may cause illness in animals or humans. In humans, several coronaviruses are known to cause respiratory infections ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). The most recently discovered coronavirus is named SARS CoV-2.

Coronaviruses are zoonotic, meaning they are normally transmitted between animals and people. The SARS CoV-2 is a new strain of coronavirus that has not been previously identified in humans. It was first reported to the WHO on the 31st of December, 2019 in Wuhan, China.

## What is CoVID-19?

COVID-19 is the infectious disease caused by the most recently discovered coronavirus, SARS CoV-2. This new virus and disease were unknown before the outbreak began in Wuhan, China, in December 2019. The disease has rapidly spread to over 110 countries.

## Is there a confirmed case of COVID-19 in Nigeria?

Yes.

As at Monday March 9, 2020, Nigeria had confirmed 2 cases of COVID-19. The first case (index case) was confirmed in Lagos in a person who travelled from Italy to Nigeria on Thursday February 27, 2020 and the second case was a close contact of the index case, who was being followed up whilst in isolation and tested positive for the virus on March 8, 2020.

## How is COVID-19 spread?

COVID-19 can spread from person to person through small droplets from the nose or mouth which are spread when a person with COVID-19 coughs or exhales. These droplets land on objects and surfaces around the person.

Other people then catch COVID-19 by touching these objects or surfaces, then touching their eyes, nose or mouth. People can also catch COVID-19 if they breathe in droplets from a person with COVID-19 who coughs out or exhales droplets. This is why it is important to stay more than 1 meter (3 feet) away from a person who is sick.

## What is Nigeria doing to control the spread of COVID-19 in Nigeria?

The Government of Nigeria, through the Federal Ministry of Health (FMOH), has been strengthening measures to ensure Nigeria is prepared in the event of an outbreak.

- The multi-sectoral Coronavirus Preparedness Group led by the Nigerian Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) has been activated to a national Emergency Operations Centre to coordinate response activities.
- The Lagos and Ogun State Governments have activated respective Emergency Operation Centres to coordinate response activities in these States.
- The NCDC is working with State Governments to identify and trace and monitor contacts of the confirmed index case, in Nigeria.
- The Port Health Services Division of the Department of Public Health has heightened screening and surveillance at the ports of entry, particularly for returning travellers with travel history to countries with on-going transmission in the last 14 days.
- Residents of the Nigeria Field Epidemiology and Training Programme (NFELTP) are working closely with staff at Port Health Services to screen, review and analyse the forms used for screening at points of entry. This is also for contact tracing when needed.
- The NCDC, Federal Ministry of Health (FMOH), Lagos State Ministry of Health (LSMOH) and Ogun State Ministry of Health have continued to educate and inform the public and other stakeholders through release of announcements, public health advisories, situation reports, videos, and other guidelines on the control of the spread of COVID-19

NCDC has a Toll-free number [080097000010](tel:080097000010) to receive calls for any suspected case or contacts

## What is the National Case Definition for COVID-19?

### Suspect Case:

Any person (including severely ill patients) with any of the following symptoms: fever, cough or difficulty in breathing who within 14 days before the onset of illness had any of the following exposures:

- History of travel to/from any country\* with confirmed and on-going community transmission of COVID-19, or
- Close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19, or
- Exposure to a healthcare facility where COVID-19 case(s) have been reported.
- Probable case:
- A suspect case for whom testing for COVID-19 is inconclusive or for whom testing was positive.

### Confirmed case:

- Any person with laboratory confirmation of SARS-CoV-2 infection with or without signs and symptoms.

If you or anyone around you matches the case definition above, please stay at home and contact NCDC to arrange for sample collection and testing on 07032864444

*\*Countries with ongoing community transmission as at March 9, 2020: China, Republic of Korea, Italy, Iran, France, Germany and Japan.*

For updates on COVID-19 by country, check [https://www.who.int/redirect-pages/page/novel-coronavirus-\(covid-19\)-situation-dashboard](https://www.who.int/redirect-pages/page/novel-coronavirus-(covid-19)-situation-dashboard) or <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/>

## **Does Nigeria have the capacity to diagnose COVID-19?**

Yes.

There are four laboratories with the capacity to test for COVID-19 in Nigeria. The NCDC National Reference Laboratory; Lagos University Teaching Hospital; Irrua Teaching Hospital; and African Centre for Genomics of Infectious Diseases in Ede, Osun State. These are all in the NCDC molecular laboratory network. Health officials are advised to call 07032864444 for sample transportation and related advice if they have a case that fits the national case definition

## **Where are the treatment Centres in Nigeria?**

Treatment centres are located in the five priority states with international airports; Lagos, Rivers, Enugu, Kano and the Federal Capital Territory. Healthcare workers from these treatment centres have been trained on how to manage COVID-19 cases using approved guidelines.

## **What should I do when I return to Nigeria from a country with confirmed case(s) of COVID-19?**

If you have travelled from any country with ongoing community transmission of COVID-19 to Nigeria in the last 14 days, you should stay indoors and avoid contact with other people. Please follow this advice even if you do not have symptoms of the virus. If you develop symptoms during this time, immediately contact NCDC on 07032864444 or 0800-970000-10 (toll-free). Do not present at your healthcare provider without a prior call to the NCDC who will direct you on where to seek healthcare.

## **What should I do if I suspect I have been exposed to a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19?**

Immediately notify the NCDC on the toll-free number 0800-970000-10

You may be advised to stay indoors (self-quarantine) for a period of 14 days with daily monitoring

by the NCDC to see if you develop any symptoms. Please avoid close contact with other people at this time. If you do develop symptoms during the period, the NCDC working through the State health authorities will arrange for your testing and if positive, you will be moved to a treatment centre.

## What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

- Dry Cough
- Fever
- Breathing difficulties



Unwell people who have recently travelled from any country with ongoing community transmission of COVID-19 should immediately contact NCDC on **07032864444** or **0800-970000-10 (toll-free)**.

## Is there anything a person can do to avoid becoming infected and prevent spread of COVID-19?

Yes.

Stay aware of the latest official information on the COVID-19 outbreak, available on the WHO website (<https://www.who.int>) and through NCDC, FMOH and LSMOH websites and social media handles.

To reduce the risk of infection or spread of COVID-19, members of the public are advised to adhere to the following hand, respiratory hygiene and social distance measures:

- Wash your hands regularly (for at least 20 seconds) with soap under running water and use hand sanitizers frequently.
- Cover your mouth and nose properly with tissue paper when sneezing and/or coughing and immediately dispose of the tissue in a covered waste bin. After this, wash your hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer.
- You may also cough into your elbow if a disposable tissue is not available. You are strongly advised not to re-use handkerchiefs.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth
- If you become sick while travelling, you should avoid close contact with other people while you are symptomatic and cover your mouth and nose with a face mask.
- Avoid close contact with anyone showing symptoms of respiratory illness such as coughing and sneezing by maintaining a distance of at least 2m (5ft) from the sick person
- If you feel unwell, stay at home. If you have a fever, cough and difficulty breathing, call NCDC Toll free line on **0800-970000-10** and follow the instructions for seeking healthcare
- Healthcare workers are advised to observe standard infection prevention and control measures when attending to patients and take a travel history



## Should I stop my children from going to school at this time?

No.

The current situation in the country does not warrant a shutdown of daily activities. During a pandemic, various measures are instituted depending on how serious the illness is and how easily it is spread from person to person. At the moment, there are two confirmed cases in Nigeria. (index case is imported and the other is a contact of index case, both in isolation as are other contacts). Therefore, measures such as school closure or closure of large gatherings are not required. Persons with persistent cough or sneezing should stay home or keep a social distance, but not mix in a crowd.

See NCDC guidance for schools at [https://www.ncdc.gov.ng/themes/common/docs/protocols/175\\_1583410399.pdf](https://www.ncdc.gov.ng/themes/common/docs/protocols/175_1583410399.pdf)

WHO/UNICEF/IFRC guidance for schools [https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/key-messages-and-actions-for-covid-19-prevention-and-control-in-schools-march-2020.pdf?sfvrsn=baf81d52\\_4](https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/key-messages-and-actions-for-covid-19-prevention-and-control-in-schools-march-2020.pdf?sfvrsn=baf81d52_4)

## What can businesses do to protect their staff?

Businesses have an important role to play in protecting their employees and the general public. Employers are advised stay informed through official channels of communication on COVID-19 (NCDC/LSMOH/FMOH) and to circulate NCDC's public health advisory on COVID-19 to all staff. In addition, workplaces are advised to follow WHO guidelines on COVID-19 Workplace readiness [https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/getting-workplace-ready-for-covid-19.pdf?sfvrsn=359a81e7\\_6](https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/getting-workplace-ready-for-covid-19.pdf?sfvrsn=359a81e7_6)

## Is there community infection in Nigeria?

There is no evidence of community infection going on in Nigeria as at March 9, 2020. Community transmission of COVID-19 is occurring when there are outbreaks of the disease in which a large number of cases cannot be linked to any contact with confirmed or suspected cases. This is not the case at the moment in Nigeria.

## Should we leave the country?

There is no evidence of community infection going on in Nigeria as at March 9, 2020. And so the risk of getting infected is still low for the vast majority of the population. Public health measures including port of entry screening, contact tracing, isolation and quarantine for confirmed/suspected cases are helping to contain the potential for a widespread outbreak.

By staying informed and taking personal health protective measures, you will reduce any risk of infection and therefore there is no need to leave the country.

Travelling, especially to countries with ongoing transmission may actually increase your risk.

## Should I be wearing a face mask?

Only wear a mask if you are ill with COVID-19 symptoms (especially coughing) or looking after someone who may have COVID-19. Disposable face masks can only be used once. If you are not ill or looking after someone who is ill then you are taking available masks away from people who need them.

## If I am sick, does a mask help to restrict spread?

Yes, because the virus is spread through droplets from the nose and mouth of someone sick with COVID-19 (coughing/sneezing), using a face mask puts an effective barrier and prevents the droplets from spreading.

## Is hand washing or hand sanitizer better?

Proper and frequent hand washing using soap and running water (for at least 20 seconds) is always the preferred and most effective method of hand hygiene. However, where hand washing is not immediately practicable, using an alcohol based rub (hand sanitizer) is equally advisable. The WHO advises to wash your hands when visibly dirty and to use a hand sanitizer/wash hands with soap and water frequently when not visibly dirty. For proper hand washing technique, see here [https://www.who.int/gpsc/clean\\_hands\\_protection/en/](https://www.who.int/gpsc/clean_hands_protection/en/)

## What is the truth about how many people are dying?

To date, over 115,000 persons from 115 countries have been infected with COVID-19 and of this number, there have been over 4,000 deaths.

COVID-19 appears to be a mild infection particularly in young adults and children. For 80% of persons infected, most develop mild symptoms. About 1 in every 5 persons who are infected go on to develop severe symptoms including breathing difficulties and will need hospital care. Older persons and persons with pre-existing medical conditions (such as high blood pressure, heart disease, lung disease, cancer or diabetes) appear to develop serious illness more often than others.

The mortality rate was high during the initial outbreak in China and now in Italy. In most territories, the mortality rate appears to be under 2%. However, this is evolving daily and the true rate is still becoming clear.

Following the health and treatment guidelines is critically important to stop the spread of the virus and also in improving the outcome.

## **Is it true that a warmer climate slows the spread?**

The current spread of the virus appears to indicate that it is spreading faster in cold climates with lower humidity. However, this has not been proven scientifically.

## **Are certain population groups immune?**

There is no evidence to suggest that this is the case. Everyone should exercise caution and take the necessary steps to prevent spread or seek appropriate treatment when necessary.

### **Avoid fake news.**

Stay updated at [www.covid19.ncdc.gov.ng](http://www.covid19.ncdc.gov.ng)

## **INFORMATION SOURCES**

NCDC - Nigeria Centre for Disease Control

WHO - World Health Organization

## **We are here to help**

For more information, support and other ways we can assist, please send an email to: [thtcallcentre@totalhealthtrust.com](mailto:thtcallcentre@totalhealthtrust.com)