COVID-19

Information for Communities

‘Protecting yourself and your family’
What is COVID-19

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus that was first identified during an investigation into an outbreak in Wuhan, China.
How does COVID-19 spread

The virus that causes COVID-19 probably emerged from an animal source, but is now spreading from person to person. The virus is thought to spread mainly between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet) through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It also may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes.
What are the Symptoms of COVID-19

Patients with COVID-19 have had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of

- fever
- cough
- shortness of breath
Who is most at risk?

While we are still learning about how COVID-19 affects people, 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.

While there is no currently available treatment or vaccine for COVID-19, many of the symptoms can be treated.

It is also important to keep your immune system strong by continuing a healthy lifestyle; eat health food, exercise daily and get plenty of sleep.
How to Prevent COVID-19 (5 Things)

● Wash your hands frequently.

Wash your hands with soap and water or, if your hands are not visibly dirty, use an alcohol-based hand rub. This will remove the virus if it is on your hands.

● Cover your mouth and nose with a flexed elbow or tissue when coughing and sneezing.

Throw away the used tissue immediately and wash your hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand rub. This way you protect others from any virus released through coughs and sneezes.

● If possible, keep a distance of 1-2 metres between yourself and someone who is coughing, sneezing or has a fever.

COVID-19 appears to spread most easily through close contact with an infected person.
● Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth

Hands touch many surfaces which can be contaminated with the virus. If you touch your eyes, nose or mouth with your unclean hands, you can transfer the virus from the surface to yourself.

● If you have fever, cough AND difficulty breathing, seek medical care. Phone ahead and inform the health center when you will visit.

Always follow the guidance of your health care professional or national health advisories.
The concept of ‘social distancing’ is a vital way to limit the spread of COVID-19. In short, it means keeping at 1-2 metres away from others to avoid spreading the virus.

So now is the time to keep your distance from others in public - keep 1-2 metres away from others and don’t shake hands or hug. Simply share a ‘bula’ instead.

If Fijians follow this practice, it will slow any spread of COVID-19 and give our health services a better chance of being able to properly treat those who fall ill.
If an infected person goes out in public and comes into contact with people as normal, the disease can spread to 406 people after just 30 days.

But if that person limits their physical contact by half, then 15 people will be infected over 30 days.

But if they limit their social interactions by 75 per cent, the disease will infect an average of 2.5 people over 30 days.

The graphic shows just how much ‘social distancing’ can limit the spread of COVID-19 and stop our health facilities being overwhelmed.
What is the Government doing to encourage social distancing?

- Groups of 20 people or more are banned
- Safe distance of 1-2 metres
- Do not share Takis or Bilos
- Do not shake hands or hug one another
- Closure of schools, gyms and nightclubs
- Religious institutions have postponed services due to government advice
What is a close contact?

- A close contact is someone that has come in direct contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19.
- This means someone living in the same household.
- A person who spent two hours or longer in the same room.
- Face to face contact of more than 15 minutes.
Quarantine and Isolation

- **Isolation** separates sick people with the disease from people who are not sick. People can be isolated at home, in a community isolation facility or at an isolation centre.

- **Quarantine** separates people who are well but may have been exposed to the virus to see if they become sick. People will be quarantined at home and are expected to practice strict social distancing while under quarantine.
Q: What is the purpose of an isolation centre?

A: An isolation centre is used to separate sick individuals from other, uninfected people. At the isolation centre, generally a dedicated ward at a hospital, the patient will be isolated from other patients, and will be provided appropriate medical care. Health care workers will be provided appropriate protective equipment to help protect them from the virus, whilst providing care to the patient.

The MHMS will also be establishing community isolation for those not in the high risk category with mild symptoms of COVID 19 and are not in a position to be isolated at home.
Q: What is the purpose of a quarantine?

A: Individuals who are well, may be quarantined if there is the risk they are or may have been exposed to the virus and become sick. For example, if a person travelled on the same plane as a sick person. Quarantining is a precautionary measure that helps reduce the risk of a contagious disease spreading. If a person is quarantined, they will be restricted within their own home and should self-monitor closely for 14 days to see if they become sick. If after 14 days they don’t become sick, then they will be cleared and allowed to re-enter the community.
Psychosocial considerations with COVID-19

Protect yourself and be supportive to others. Assisting others in their time of need can benefit the person receiving support as well as the helper. For example, check-in by phone on neighbors or people in your community who may need some extra assistance. Working together as one community can help to create solidarity in addressing Covid-19 together.

Stay connected and maintain your social networks. Even when quarantined or isolated, try as much as possible to keep your personal daily routines or create new routines. If health authorities have recommended limiting your physical social contact to contain the outbreak, you can stay connected via e-mail, social media, video conference and telephone.

During times of stress and crisis, it is common for children to seek more attachment and be more demanding on parents. Discuss COVID-19 with your children using honest and age-appropriate way. If your children have concerns, addressing those together may ease their anxiety. Children will observe adults' behaviors and emotions for cues on how to manage their own emotions during difficult times.
Keep Informed

- Keep up to date with latest information at www.fiji.gov.fj
- Listening to news on radio and television and local news papers
- Talk to your local health focal points and local leaders
- Look up MoHMS website
- A national COVID-19 call line will soon be up and running - dial 158
- LOOK AFTER YOURSELF AND YOUR FAMILY AND LOCAL COMMUNITY
Protect Yourself and Your Family from COVID-19

What are the symptoms?
- Fever
- Cough
- Difficulty Breathing

What is COVID-19?
COVID-19 is the infectious disease caused by the most recently discovered coronavirus. COVID-19 appears to spread mostly through respiratory droplets (for instance, produced when a sick person coughs and then comes into close contact with someone with COVID-19).

Who is at risk of developing severe illness?
- Older adults
- Those with existing health conditions (such as high blood pressure, heart disease, or diabetes)

Should I worry about COVID-19?
If you are in an area where there is an outbreak of COVID-19, you need to take the risk seriously. It's a good idea to get the facts to help you accurately determine your risk so that you can take reasonable precautions. Your healthcare provider, your school's public health authority, and your employer are all potential sources of accurate information about COVID-19 and whether it is in your area. It is important to be informed of the situation where you live and take appropriate measures to protect yourself.

What can I do to protect myself?
- Wear a mask when you are around others.
- Keep a safe distance between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing.
- Avoid your hands to touch your face, nose, or mouth.
- Stay informed of the latest developments about COVID-19.

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