



UNIVERSITY OF EMBU

COVID 19 Sensitization, Counselling and Contact Tracing Sub-Committee

Frequently Asked Questions on COVID 19

What is COVID 19?

COVID-19 is the infectious disease caused by the most recently discovered coronavirus. This new virus and disease were unknown before the outbreak began in Wuhan, China, in December 2019. COVID-19 is now a pandemic affecting many countries globally.

What are the symptoms of COVID 19?

The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, dry cough, and tiredness. Other symptoms that are less common and may affect some patients include aches and pains, nasal congestion, headache, conjunctivitis, sore throat, diarrhea, loss of taste or smell or a rash on skin or discoloration of fingers or toes. These symptoms are usually mild and begin gradually. Some people become infected but only have very mild symptoms.

Older people, and those with underlying medical problems like high blood pressure, heart and lung problems, diabetes, or cancer, are at higher risk of developing serious illness. However, anyone can catch COVID-19 and become seriously ill.

If you have minor symptoms, such as a slight cough or a mild fever, there is generally no need to seek medical care. Stay at home, self-isolate and monitor your symptoms. Seek immediate medical care if you have difficulty breathing or pain/pressure in the chest.

How does COVID 19 spread?

People can catch COVID-19 from others who have the virus. The disease spreads primarily from person to person through small droplets from the nose or mouth, which are expelled when a person with COVID-19 coughs, sneezes, or speaks. These droplets can land on objects and surfaces around the person such as tables, doorknobs and handrails. People can become infected by touching these objects or surfaces, then touching their eyes, nose or mouth. This is why it is



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Knowledge Transforms



ISO 9001:2015 Certified

important to wash your hands regularly with soap and water or clean with alcohol-based hand rub.

How can we protect others and ourselves?

Practicing hand and respiratory hygiene is important at ALL times and is the best way to protect others and yourself-

When possible maintain at least a 1 meter distance between yourself and others. Since some infected persons may not yet be exhibiting symptoms or their symptoms may be mild, maintaining a physical distance with everyone is important.

How do I properly wear a mask?

1. Before touching the mask, clean hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water
2. Take the mask and inspect it for tears or holes.
3. Orient which side is the top side (where the metal strip is).
4. Ensure the proper side of the mask faces outwards (the coloured side).
5. Place the mask to your face. Pinch the metal strip or stiff edge of the mask so it moulds to the shape of your nose.
6. Pull down the mask's bottom so it covers your mouth and your chin.
7. Do not touch the mask while you are wearing it for protection.
8. After use, take off the mask with clean hands; remove the elastic loops from behind the ears while keeping the mask away from your face and clothes, to avoid touching potentially contaminated surfaces of the mask.
9. Discard the mask in a closed bin immediately after use. Do not reuse the mask.
10. Perform hand hygiene after touching or discarding the mask – Use alcohol-based hand rub or, if visibly soiled, wash your hands with soap and water.

Remember that masks are not a substitute for other ways to protect yourself and others against COVID-19 such as frequently washing your hands, covering your cough with the bend of elbow or tissue and maintain a distance of at least 1 meter from others.

PSYCHOLOGICAL ISSUES DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic is stressful and everyone reacts differently to this stressful (traumatic) situation. One should take care of self, others and the University community.

Psychological Issues

The following are some issues that one needs to be aware of during the COVID-19 Pandemic:

1. That reactions to the COVID-19 Pandemic are normal to an abnormal and traumatic situation.



2. That one needs to accept what cannot be changed, for example the existence of the COVID-19 disease in our community.
3. That one's reactions can take many forms including the following:
 - a. Anxiety over uncertainties e.g. on re-opening of universities or non-completion of programmes as planned
 - b. Financial strain due to reduced economic activities causing sudden financial insecurity
 - c. Fatigue in staying at home for long without meaningful activities
 - d. Anger outburst that have no direct source, a reaction to not knowing what to do or expect from others
 - e. Sadness due to loss of a loved one(s) or friend(s) or workmate(s) to COVID-19
 - f. Stress due to strained relationships with people who had not stayed together over a long period of time as it has been with the corona virus disease period
 - g. Loss of opportunity for instance economic activities.
 - h. Fear of infection with the disease, one becoming paranoid when with other people
 - i. Suspicion of each other of being COVID-19 positive
 - j. Many students entered resource-limited or stressful domestic situations that are not conducive to e-learning
 - k. Significant weight loss or gain (obesity)
 - l. Loss of hope for the future, believing things will never get better or nothing will change
 - m. Low level socialization and loneliness (losing a network of interdependent roles and relationships so suddenly will produce helpless rage for many of those impacted after the initial shock wears off. Lack of robust social connections can raise one's health risks as smoking many cigarettes a day or misusing/abusing alcohol
 - n. Stigmatization for those who may have tested Covid-19 positive, relatives who tested positive or seeing everyone as being Covid-19 positive.
 - o. Using alcohol and drugs, smoking which are inappropriate ways of coping

COPING/MITIGATING THE EFFECTS OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Taking action now can mitigate the toxic effects of COVID-19 pandemic. The following are some ways one can cope to the pandemic.

- a) Accept the situation as is and avoid being in denial
- b) Engage in body or self or psychological care for example washing hands using running water, wearing of masks, sanitizing using alcohol based sanitizers. To take care of your body:
 - o take deep breaths, stretch or meditate
 - o eat healthy, balanced nutritious food
 - o exercise regularly
 - o have plenty of sleep
 - o avoid excessive alcohol and drug use
- c) Do Yoga
- d) Count your blessing including life FOR there are those who have died from COVID-19
- e) De-stigmatization-it's not any one's wish to be infected of COVID-19 disease.
- f) Make time to unwind. Try to do some other activities you enjoy.



- g) Connect with others. Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling.
- h) Connect with your community- or faith-based organizations. While social distancing measures are in place, consider connecting online, through social media, or by phone or mail. Attending church service will require that you keep the Ministry of Health protocols and guidelines.
- i) Know or seek to know the facts about COVID-19 to help reduce stress, stigma
- j) Know what to do if you are sick and are concerned about COVID-19. Contact a health professional before you start any self-treatment for COVID-19.
- k) Take care of your emotional health. Taking care of your emotional health will help you think clearly and react to the urgent needs to protect yourself and your family.
- l) Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including those on social media. Hearing about the pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting and stressful.
- m) Know where and how to get treatment and other support services and resources, including counseling or therapy (in person or through telephone services).
- n) Understand that a psychological reaction to the trauma is normal.

CONTACT TRACING

What is contact tracing and why is it important?

People in close contact with an infected person are at higher risk of becoming infected themselves, and of potentially further infecting others.

Closely watching these contacts after exposure to an infected person will help the contacts to get care and treatment, and will prevent further transmission of the virus.

As a containment measure, contact tracing is an important intervention in limiting the spread of the virus transmission.

By participating in the contact listing process, we all shall be playing an important role in breaking the chains of transmission.

Towards this, all members of staff will be required to give details with regard to their points of contact at work and areas of residence. These forms shall be availed at the departmental level.

