Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)
Situation Report – 66

World Health Organization

Data as reported by national authorities by 10:00 CET 26 March 2020

HIGHLIGHTS

- Three new countries/territories/areas from the Region of the Americas [1], and African Region [2] have reported cases of COVID-19.
- The United Nations launched a US$2 billion COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan to support the world's most vulnerable countries. More information can be found here.
- The WHO Director-General mentioned many key issues and action steps to effectively combat COVID-19, as well as maintaining physical distance but not social distance. More information can be found here.
- WHO published the *COVID-19: Operational guidance for maintaining essential health services during an outbreak* and the *Handbook for public health capacity-building at ground crossings and cross-border collaboration* on 25 March 2020. All guidance documents can be found here.
- In light of additional evidence, WHO maintains the recommendation of performing hand hygiene and regularly cleaning and disinfecting surfaces. The use of medical masks and respirators are for circumstances and settings where aerosol generating procedures are performed. Greater detail can be found in *Subject in Focus.*

SITUATION IN NUMBERS
total (new) cases in last 24 hours

Globally
462 684 confirmed (49 219)
20 834 deaths (2401)

Western Pacific Region
99 058 confirmed (1292)
3540 deaths (22)

European Region
250 287 confirmed (29 771)
13 950 deaths (1964)

South-East Asia Region
2536 confirmed (192)
79 deaths (7)

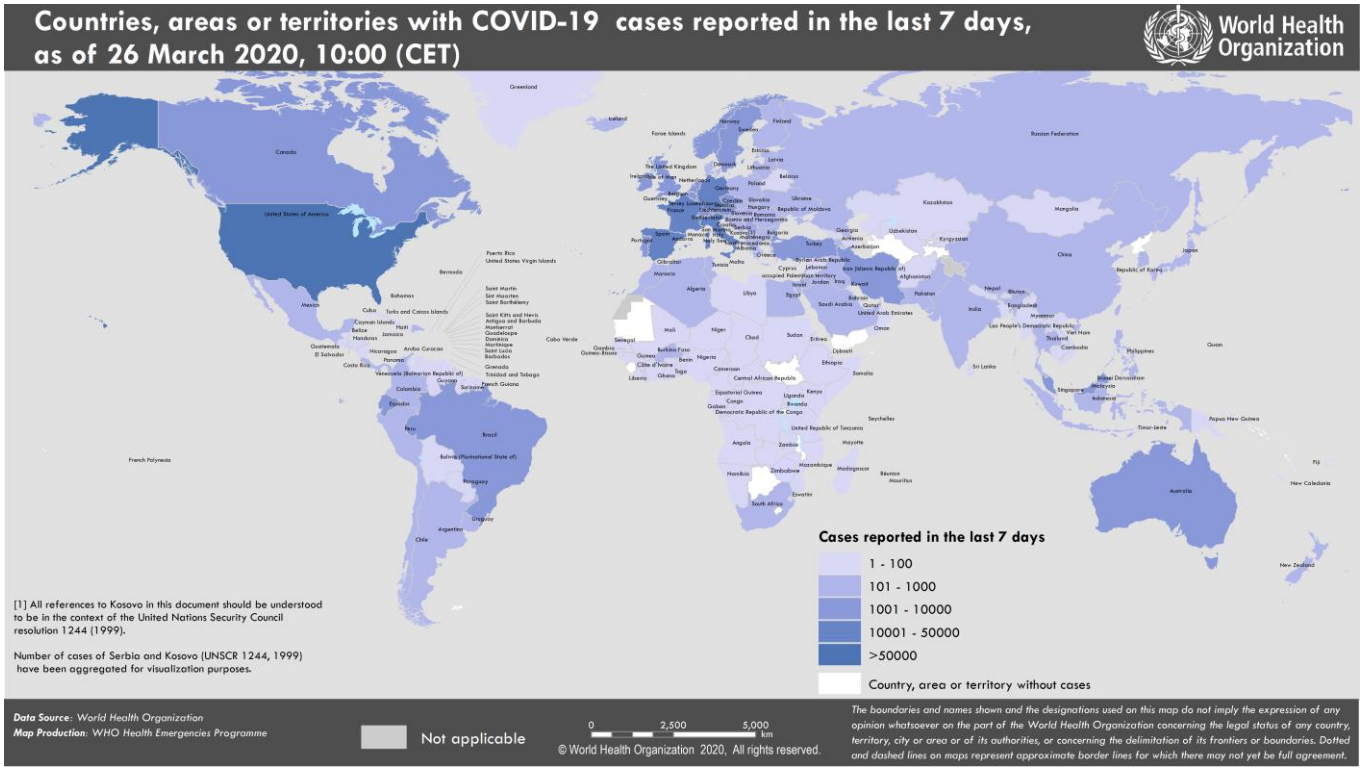
Eastern Mediterranean Region
32 442 confirmed (2811)
2162 deaths (154)

Region of the Americas
75 712 confirmed (14 878)
1065 deaths (252)

African Region
1937 confirmed (275)
31 deaths (2)

WHO RISK ASSESSMENT
Global Level Very High

Figure 1. Countries, territories or areas with reported confirmed cases of COVID-19, 26 March 2020



SUBJECT IN FOCUS: COVID-19 virus persistence: Implications for transmission and precaution recommendations

An experimental study, which evaluated virus persistence of the COVID-19 virus (SARS-CoV-2), has recently been published in the NEJM[1.] In this experimental study, aerosols were generated using a three-jet Collison nebulizer and fed into a Goldberg drum under controlled laboratory conditions. This is a high-powered machine that does not reflect normal human coughing or sneezing nor does it reflect aerosol generating procedures in clinical settings. Furthermore, the findings do not bring new evidence on airborne transmission as aerosolization with particles potentially containing the virus was already known as a possibility during procedures generating aerosols.

In all other contexts, available evidence indicates that COVID-19 virus is transmitted during close contact through respiratory droplets (such as coughing) and by fomites.[2-8] The virus can spread directly from person to person when a COVID-19 case coughs or exhales producing droplets that reach the nose, mouth or eyes of another person. Alternatively, as the droplets are too heavy to be airborne, they land on objects and surfaces surrounding the person. Other people become infected with COVID-19 by touching these contaminated objects or surfaces, then touching their eyes, nose or mouth. According to the currently available evidence, transmission through smaller droplet nuclei (airborne transmission) that propagate through air at distances longer than 1 meter is limited to aerosol generating procedures during clinical care of COVID-19 patients.

As such, WHO continues to recommend that everyone performs hand hygiene frequently, follows respiratory etiquette recommendations and regularly clean and disinfect surfaces. WHO also continues to recommend the importance of maintaining physical distances and avoiding people with fever or respiratory symptoms. These preventive measures will limit viral transmission.

Since the start of the COVID-19 outbreak, and in alignment with available evidence, WHO maintains the recommendation, in the context of droplet and contact precautions for the use of medical masks for regular care of COVID-19 patients and respirators (N95, FFP2 or FFP3) for circumstances and settings where aerosol generating procedures are performed.[9]

References

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9. WHO Infection Prevention and Control Guidance for COVID-19 available at https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/technical-guidance/infection-prevention-and-control

SURVEILLANCE

Table 1. Countries, territories or areas with reported laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases and deaths. Data as of 26 March 2020[*]

Reporting Country/ Territory/Area[†]	Total confirmed [‡] cases	Total confirmed new cases	Total deaths	Total new deaths	Transmission classification[§]	Days since last reported case
Western Pacific Region						
China	81961	113	3293	6	Local transmission	0
Republic of Korea	9241	104	131	5	Local transmission	0
Australia	2799	547	11	3	Local transmission	0
Malaysia	1796	172	19	3	Local transmission	0
Japan	1291	98	45	2	Local transmission	0
Philippines	636	84	38	3	Local transmission	0
Singapore	631	73	2	0	Local transmission	0
New Zealand	262	73	0	0	Local transmission	0
Viet Nam	141	7	0	0	Local transmission	0
Brunei Darussalam	109	5	0	0	Local transmission	0
Cambodia	96	5	0	0	Local transmission	0
Mongolia	10	0	0	0	Imported cases only	4
Fiji	5	1	0	0	Local transmission	0
Lao People's Democratic Republic	3	1	0	0	Under investigation	0
Papua New Guinea	1	0	0	0	Imported cases only	5
Territories[**]						
Guam	37	5	1	0	Local transmission	0
French Polynesia	25	0	0	0	Local transmission	1
New Caledonia	14	4	0	0	Local transmission	0
European Region						
Italy	74386	5210	7505	685	Local transmission	0
Spain	47610	7937	3434	738	Local transmission	0
Germany	36508	4954	198	49	Local transmission	0
France	24920	2895	1331	231	Local transmission	0
Switzerland	9714	925	103	17	Local transmission	0
The United Kingdom	9533	1452	463	41	Local transmission	0
Netherlands	6412	852	356	80	Local transmission	0
Austria	5888	606	34	4	Local transmission	0
Belgium	4937	668	178	56	Local transmission	0
Portugal	2995	633	43	10	Local transmission	0
Norway	2916	350	12	2	Local transmission	0
Sweden	2510	238	42	6	Local transmission	0
Turkey	2433	561	59	15	Local transmission	0
Israel	2369	199	5	0	Local transmission	0
Denmark	1724	133	34	2	Local transmission	0
Czechia	1654	260	6	3	Local transmission	0
Ireland	1564	235	9	2	Local transmission	0
Luxembourg	1333	234	8	0	Local transmission	0
Poland	1051	150	14	4	Local transmission	0
Romania	906	144	13	2	Local transmission	0
Finland	880	88	3	2	Local transmission	0
Russian Federation	840	182	2	2	Local transmission	0
Greece	821	78	22	2	Local transmission	0
Iceland	737	89	2	0	Local transmission	0
Slovenia	528	48	4	1	Local transmission	0

Croatia	418	36	1	0	Local transmission	0
Estonia	404	35	1	1	Local transmission	0
Serbia	384	81	4	1	Local transmission	0
Armenia	290	25	0	0	Local transmission	0
Lithuania	274	65	4	2	Local transmission	0
Hungary	261	35	10	0	Local transmission	0
Bulgaria	242	22	3	0	Local transmission	0
Latvia	221	24	0	0	Local transmission	0
Slovakia	216	12	0	0	Local transmission	0
Andorra	213	25	3	2	Local transmission	0
San Marino	208	21	21	0	Local transmission	0
North Macedonia	177	29	2	0	Local transmission	0
Albania	174	28	5	0	Local transmission	0
Bosnia and Herzegovina	173	9	3	1	Local transmission	0
Ukraine	156	43	5	1	Local transmission	0
Republic of Moldova	149	24	1	0	Local transmission	0
Cyprus	132	8	3	0	Local transmission	0
Malta	129	9	0	0	Local transmission	0
Kazakhstan	97	18	0	0	Imported cases only	0
Azerbaijan	93	6	2	1	Local transmission	0
Belarus	86	5	0	0	Local transmission	0
Georgia	77	4	0	0	Local transmission	0
Uzbekistan	65	15	0	0	Local transmission	0
Montenegro	52	23	1	1	Imported cases only	0
Liechtenstein	51	4	0	0	Imported cases only	0
Kyrgyzstan	44	2	0	0	Local transmission	0
Monaco	23	0	0	0	Local transmission	3
Holy See	4	3	0	0	Under investigation	0
Territories**						
Faroe Islands	132	10	0	0	Local transmission	0
Kosovo[1]	71	8	1	0	Local transmission	0
Guernsey	30	7	0	0	Local transmission	0
Gibraltar	26	11	0	0	Local transmission	0
Isle of Man	23	0	0	0	Imported cases only	1
Jersey	18	2	0	0	Local transmission	0
Greenland	5	1	0	0	Under investigation	0
South-East Asia Region						
Thailand	934	0	4	0	Local transmission	1
Indonesia	790	104	58	3	Local transmission	0
India	649	87	13	4	Local transmission	0
Sri Lanka	102	0	0	0	Local transmission	1
Bangladesh	39	0	4	0	Local transmission	1
Maldives	13	0	0	0	Local transmission	10
Myanmar	3	0	0	0	Imported cases only	1
Nepal	3	1	0	0	Imported cases only	0
Bhutan	2	0	0	0	Imported cases only	6
Timor-Leste	1	0	0	0	Imported cases only	5
Eastern Mediterranean Region						
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	27017	2206	2077	143	Local transmission	0
Pakistan	1057	66	8	1	Local transmission	0
Saudi Arabia	900	133	2	1	Local transmission	0
Qatar	537	11	0	0	Local transmission	0

Egypt	456	54	21	1	Local transmission	0
Bahrain	419	27	4	1	Local transmission	0
Iraq	346	30	29	2	Local transmission	0
Lebanon	333	29	4	0	Local transmission	0
United Arab Emirates	333	85	2	0	Local transmission	0
Morocco	225	55	6	1	Local transmission	0
Kuwait	208	13	0	0	Local transmission	0
Tunisia	173	59	5	2	Local transmission	0
Jordan	172	19	0	0	Local transmission	0
Oman	99	0	0	0	Local transmission	1
Afghanistan	80	6	2	1	Local transmission	0
Djibouti	12	9	0	0	Local transmission	0
Syrian Arab Republic	5	4	0	0	Imported cases only	0
Sudan	3	0	1	0	Imported cases only	1
Somalia	2	1	0	0	Imported cases only	0
Libya	1	0	0	0	Imported cases only	1
Territories[**]						
occupied Palestinian territory	64	4	1	1	Local transmission	0
Region of the Americas						
United States of America	63570	11656	884	211	Local transmission	0
Canada	3409	1670	35	10	Local transmission	0
Brazil	2433	232	57	11	Local transmission	0
Ecuador	1211	162	29	2	Local transmission	0
Chile	1142	220	3	1	Local transmission	0
Panama	558	213	8	2	Local transmission	0
Peru	480	64	9	4	Local transmission	0
Mexico	478	108	5	1	Local transmission	0
Colombia	470	164	4	1	Local transmission	0
Dominican Republic	392	80	10	4	Local transmission	0
Argentina	387	86	6	2	Local transmission	0
Uruguay	217	55	0	0	Imported cases only	0
Costa Rica	201	24	2	0	Local transmission	0
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	91	14	0	0	Local transmission	0
Trinidad and Tobago	60	3	1	1	Local transmission	0
Cuba	57	9	1	0	Local transmission	0
Honduras	52	22	0	0	Local transmission	0
Paraguay	41	14	3	1	Local transmission	0
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	39	11	0	0	Local transmission	0
Jamaica	26	5	1	0	Local transmission	0
Guatemala	24	3	1	0	Local transmission	0
Barbados	18	0	0	0	Local transmission	1
El Salvador	13	8	0	0	Imported cases only	0
Haiti	8	1	0	0	Imported cases only	0
Dominica	7	5	0	0	Local transmission	0
Suriname	7	1	0	0	Imported cases only	0
Bahamas	5	1	0	0	Local transmission	0
Guyana	5	0	1	0	Local transmission	7
Antigua and Barbuda	3	0	0	0	Imported cases only	1
Saint Lucia	3	0	0	0	Imported cases only	2
Belize	2	1	0	0	Local transmission	0

Nicaragua	2	0	0	0	Imported cases only	4
Saint Kitts and Nevis	2	2	0	0	Imported cases only	0
Grenada	1	0	0	0	Imported cases only	3
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	1	0	0	0	Imported cases only	13
Territories[**]						
Guadeloupe	76	3	0	0	Imported cases only	0
Martinique	66	9	1	1	Imported cases only	0
Puerto Rico	51	12	2	0	Imported cases only	0
French Guiana	28	5	0	0	Local transmission	0
Aruba	19	7	0	0	Local transmission	0
United States Virgin Islands	17	0	0	0	Imported cases only	2
Saint Martin	11	3	0	0	Under investigation	0
Cayman Islands	8	3	1	0	Imported cases only	0
Bermuda	7	1	0	0	Local transmission	0
Curaçao	6	0	1	0	Imported cases only	1
Saint Barthélemy	3	0	0	0	Under investigation	10
Montserrat	2	1	0	0	Imported cases only	0
Sint Maarten	2	0	0	0	Imported cases only	2
Turks and Caicos Islands	1	0	0	0	Imported cases only	2
African Region						
South Africa	709	155	0	0	Local transmission	0
Algeria	264	0	17	0	Local transmission	1
Burkina Faso	146	32	3	0	Local transmission	0
Senegal	99	13	0	0	Local transmission	0
Côte d'Ivoire	80	8	0	0	Imported cases only	0
Cameroon	70	0	1	0	Local transmission	2
Ghana	68	15	2	0	Local transmission	0
Democratic Republic of the Congo	51	6	3	1	Local transmission	0
Mauritius	47	5	2	0	Imported cases only	0
Nigeria	46	4	1	1	Local transmission	0
Rwanda	41	1	0	0	Local transmission	0
Kenya	25	0	0	0	Local transmission	1
Togo	23	3	0	0	Imported cases only	0
Madagascar	19	0	0	0	Imported cases only	1
Uganda	14	5	0	0	Imported cases only	0
United Republic of Tanzania	13	1	0	0	Imported cases only	0
Ethiopia	12	0	0	0	Imported cases only	1
Seychelles	7	0	0	0	Imported cases only	4
Equatorial Guinea	6	0	0	0	Imported cases only	4
Gabon	6	0	1	0	Imported cases only	3
Benin	5	0	0	0	Imported cases only	2
Central African Republic	5	1	0	0	Imported cases only	0
Mozambique	5	2	0	0	Local transmission	0
Namibia	5	1	0	0	Imported cases only	0
Congo	4	0	0	0	Imported cases only	4
Eritrea	4	3	0	0	Imported cases only	0
Eswatini	4	0	0	0	Imported cases only	3
Guinea	4	0	0	0	Imported cases only	2

Cabo Verde	3	0	0	0	Imported cases only	4
Chad	3	0	0	0	Imported cases only	2
Liberia	3	0	0	0	Local transmission	4
Zambia	3	0	0	0	Imported cases only	3
Angola	2	0	0	0	Imported cases only	4
Gambia	2	0	0	0	Imported cases only	1
Guinea-Bissau	2	2	0	0	Imported cases only	0
Mali	2	2	0	0	Imported cases only	0
Mauritania	2	0	0	0	Imported cases only	7
Niger	2	0	0	0	Imported cases only	2
Zimbabwe	2	0	1	0	Imported cases only	4
Territories**						
Réunion	94	11	0	0	Local transmission	0
Mayotte	35	5	0	0	Local transmission	0
Subtotal for all regions	**461972**	**49219**	**20827**	**2401**		
International conveyance (Diamond Princess)	712	0	7	0	Local transmission	10
Grand total	**462684**	**49219**	**20834**	**2401**		

*Numbers include both domestic and repatriated cases

†The designations employed and the presentation of the material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of WHO concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. Dotted and dashed lines on maps represent approximate border lines for which there may not yet be full agreement.

‡Case classifications are based on WHO case definitions for COVID-19.

§Transmission classification is based on WHO analysis of available official data and may be subject to reclassification as additional data become available. Countries/territories/areas experiencing multiple types of transmission are classified in the highest category for which there is evidence; they may be removed from a given category if interruption of transmission can be demonstrated. It should be noted that even within categories, different countries/territories/areas may have differing degrees of transmission as indicated by the differing numbers of cases and other factors. Not all locations within a given country/territory/area are equally affected.

Terms:

- **Community transmission** is evidenced by the inability to relate confirmed cases through chains of transmission for a large number of cases, or by increasing positive tests through sentinel samples (routine systematic testing of respiratory samples from established laboratories).
- **Local transmission** indicates locations where the source of infection is within the reporting location.
- **Imported cases only** indicates locations where all cases have been acquired outside the location of reporting.
- **Under investigation** indicates locations where type of transmission has not been determined for any cases.
- **Interrupted transmission** indicates locations where interruption of transmission has been demonstrated (details to be determined)

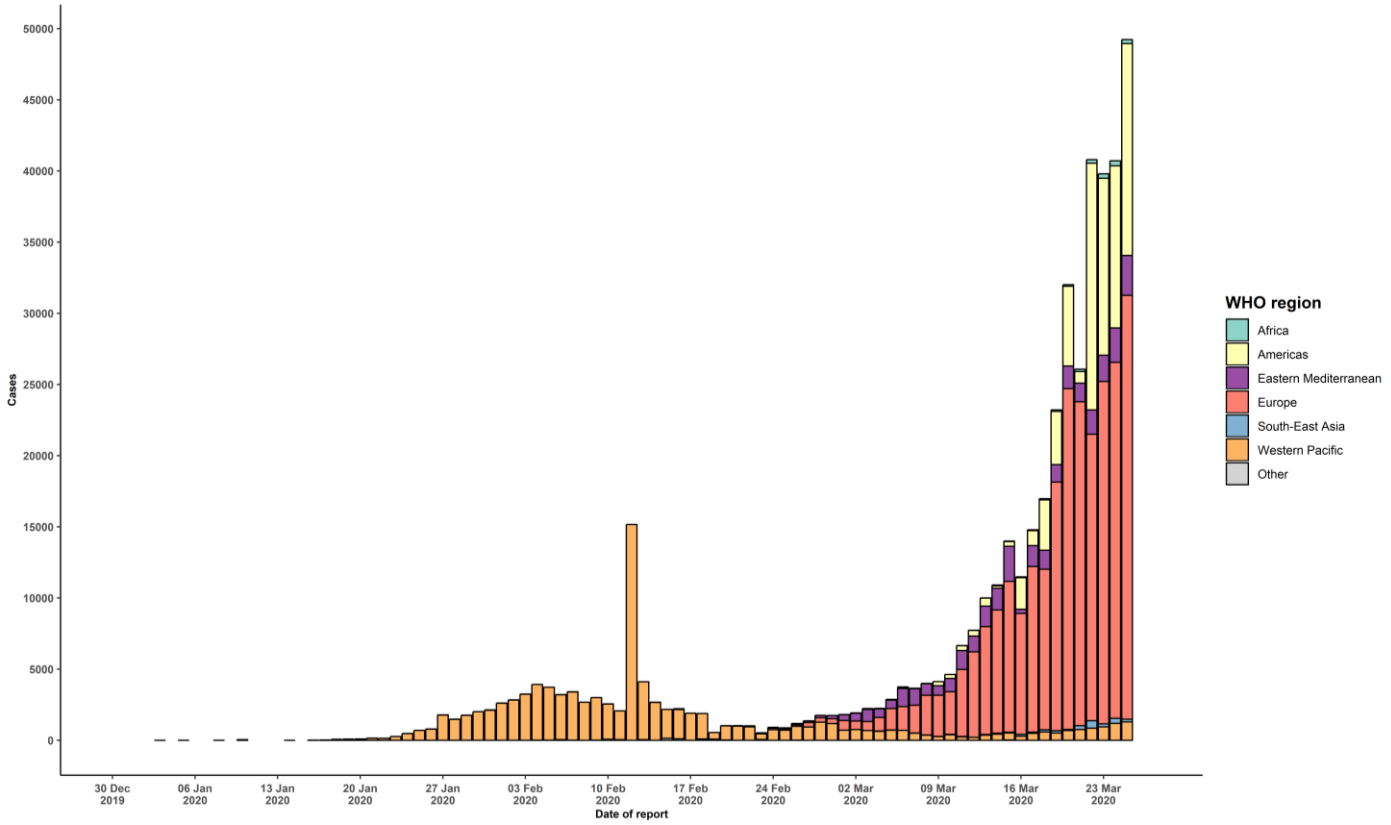
** "Territories" include territories, areas, overseas dependencies and other jurisdictions of similar status

[1] All references to Kosovo should be understood to be in the context of the United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

Due to differences in reporting methods, retrospective data consolidation, and reporting delays, the number of new cases may not always reflect the exact difference between yesterday's and today's totals. WHO COVID-19 Situation Reports present official counts of confirmed COVID-19 cases, thus differences between WHO reports and other sources of COVID-19 data using different inclusion criteria and different data cutoff times are to be expected.

New countries/territories/areas are shown in red.

Figure 2. Epidemic curve of confirmed COVID-19, by date of report and WHO region through 26 March 2020



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

WHO's strategic objectives for this response are to:

- Interrupt human-to-human transmission including reducing secondary infections among close contacts and health care workers, preventing transmission amplification events, and preventing further international spread*;
- Identify, isolate and care for patients early, including providing optimized care for infected patients;
- Identify and reduce transmission from the animal source;
- Address crucial unknowns regarding clinical severity, extent of transmission and infection, treatment options, and accelerate the development of diagnostics, therapeutics and vaccines;
- Communicate critical risk and event information to all communities and counter misinformation;
- Minimize social and economic impact through multisectoral partnerships.

*This can be achieved through a combination of public health measures, such as rapid identification, diagnosis and management of the cases, identification and follow up of the contacts, infection prevention and control in health care settings, implementation of health measures for travelers, awareness-raising in the population and risk communication.

PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

- To view all technical guidance documents regarding COVID-19, please go to this webpage.
- WHO has developed interim guidance for laboratory diagnosis, advice on the use of masks during home care and in health care settings in the context of the novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) outbreak, clinical management, infection prevention and control in health care settings, home care for patients with suspected novel coronavirus, risk communication and community engagement and Global Surveillance for human infection with novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV).
- WHO is working closely with International Air Transport Association (IATA) and have jointly developed a guidance document to provide advice to cabin crew and airport workers, based on country queries. The guidance can be found on the IATA webpage.
- WHO has been in regular and direct contact with Member States where cases have been reported. WHO is also informing other countries about the situation and providing support as requested.
- WHO is working with its networks of researchers and other experts to coordinate global work on surveillance, epidemiology, mathematical modelling, diagnostics and virology, clinical care and treatment, infection prevention and control, and risk communication. WHO has issued interim guidance for countries, which are updated regularly.
- WHO has prepared a disease commodity package that includes an essential list of biomedical equipment, medicines and supplies necessary to care for patients with 2019-nCoV.
- WHO has provided recommendations to reduce risk of transmission from animals to humans.
- WHO has published an updated advice for international traffic in relation to the outbreak of the novel coronavirus 2019-nCoV.
- WHO has activated the R&D blueprint to accelerate diagnostics, vaccines, and therapeutics.
- OpenWHO is an interactive, web-based, knowledge-transfer platform offering online courses to improve the response to health emergencies. COVID-19 courses can be found here and courses in additional national languages here. Specifically, WHO has developed online courses on the following topics:
    - A general introduction to emerging respiratory viruses, including novel coronaviruses (available in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, Spanish, Hindi, Indian Sign Language, Persian, Portuguese, Serbian and Turkish);
    - Clinical care for Severe Acute Respiratory Infections (available in English, French, Russian, Indonesian and Vietnamese);
    - Health and safety briefing for respiratory diseases - ePROTECT (available in Chinese, English, French, Russian, Spanish, Indonesian and Portuguese);
    - Infection Prevention and Control for Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) (available in Chinese, English, French, Russian, Spanish, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese and Serbian); and
    - COVID-19 Operational Planning Guidelines and COVID-19 Partners Platform to support country preparedness and response (available in English and coming soon in additional languages).
- WHO is providing guidance on early investigations, which are critical in an outbreak of a new virus. The data collected from the protocols can be used to refine recommendations for surveillance and case definitions, to characterize the key epidemiological transmission features of COVID-19, help understand spread, severity, spectrum of disease, impact on the community and to inform operational models for implementation of countermeasures such as case isolation, contact tracing and isolation. Several protocols are available here. One such protocol is for the investigation of early COVID-19 cases and contacts (the "First Few X (FFX) Cases and contact investigation protocol for 2019-novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) infection"). The protocol is designed to gain an early understanding of the key clinical, epidemiological and virological characteristics of the first cases of COVID-19 infection detected in any individual country, to inform the development and updating of public health guidance to manage cases and reduce the potential spread and impact of infection.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND ADVICE FOR THE PUBLIC

If you are not in an area where COVID-19 is spreading or have not travelled from an area where COVID-19 is spreading or have not been in contact with an infected patient, your risk of infection is low. It is understandable that you may feel anxious about the outbreak. Get the facts from reliable sources to help you accurately determine your risks so that you can take reasonable precautions (see Frequently Asked Questions). Seek guidance from WHO, your healthcare provider, your national public health authority or your employer for accurate information on COVID-19 and whether COVID-19 is circulating where you live. It is important to be informed of the situation and take appropriate measures to protect yourself and your family (see Protection measures for everyone).

If you are in an area where there are cases of COVID-19 you need to take the risk of infection seriously. Follow the advice of WHO and guidance issued by national and local health authorities. For most people, COVID-19 infection will cause mild illness however, it can make some people very ill and, in some people, it can be fatal. Older people, and those with pre-existing medical conditions (such as cardiovascular disease, chronic respiratory disease or diabetes) are at risk for severe disease (See Protection measures for persons who are in or have recently visited (past 14 days) areas where COVID-19 is spreading).

CASE DEFINITIONS

WHO periodically updates the Global Surveillance for human infection with coronavirus disease (COVID-19) document which includes case definitions.

For easy reference, case definitions are included below.

Suspect case

A. A patient with acute respiratory illness (fever and at least one sign/symptom of respiratory disease, e.g., cough, shortness of breath), AND a history of travel to or residence in a location reporting community transmission of COVID-19 disease during the 14 days prior to symptom onset.
   OR
B. A patient with any acute respiratory illness AND having been in contact with a confirmed or probable COVID-19 case (see definition of contact) in the last 14 days prior to symptom onset;
   OR
C. A patient with severe acute respiratory illness (fever and at least one sign/symptom of respiratory disease, e.g., cough, shortness of breath; AND requiring hospitalization) AND in the absence of an alternative diagnosis that fully explains the clinical presentation.

Probable case

A. A suspect case for whom testing for the COVID-19 virus is inconclusive.
   a. Inconclusive being the result of the test reported by the laboratory.
   OR
B. A suspect case for whom testing could not be performed for any reason.

Confirmed case

A person with laboratory confirmation of COVID-19 infection, irrespective of clinical signs and symptoms.

- Technical guidance for laboratory testing can be found here.

Definition of contact

A contact is a person who experienced any one of the following exposures during the 2 days before and the 14 days

after the onset of symptoms of a probable or confirmed case:

1. Face-to-face contact with a probable or confirmed case within 1 meter and for more than 15 minutes;
2. Direct physical contact with a probable or confirmed case;
3. Direct care for a patient with probable or confirmed COVID-19 disease without using proper personal protective equipment[1]; OR
4. Other situations as indicated by local risk assessments.

Note: for confirmed asymptomatic cases, the period of contact is measured as the 2 days before through the 14 days *after the date on which the sample was taken* which led to confirmation.

[1] World Health Organization. Infection prevention and control during health care when COVID-19 is suspected https://www.who.int/publications-detail/infection-prevention-and-control-during-health-care-when-novel-coronavirus-(ncov)-infection-is-suspected-20200125