

HOW CAN ICAS SUPPORT YOU?

WHAT IS THE CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)?

The outbreak of this respiratory illness caused by a novel (new) coronavirus (named by the World Health Organization as “COVID-19”*) was first detected in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China and which continues to expand. Chinese health officials have reported thousands of infections with COVID-19 in China, with the virus reportedly spreading from person-to-person in many parts of that country. Infections with COVID-19, most of them associated with travel from Wuhan, also are being reported in a growing number of locations.

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that are common in humans and many different species of animals, including camels, cattle, cats, and bats. Rarely, animal coronaviruses can infect people and then spread between people such as with SARS, MERS, and likely now with 2019-nCoV. Current knowledge on how COVID-19 spreads is based on what is known about early COVID-19 cases and what is known about similar coronaviruses. Most often, spread from person-to-person happens during close exposure to a person infected with COVID-19. Person-to-person spread is thought to occur mainly via respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, similar to how influenza viruses and other respiratory pathogens spread. These droplets can land in the mouths, noses, or eyes of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs. It is currently unclear if 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.

United Front

ICAS, your employer, health service providers and community work closely together on all aspects related to the Coronavirus. Each of us, including you, plays an integral role.

Best practice is followed in-line with international health standards, recommendations as communicated by the World Health Organisation, notifiable diseases protocols and the Standard Operating Procedures of the South African Health Department.

What symptoms should you look out for?

The following symptoms appear normally after two weeks of contracting the virus:

- Fever
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Headaches
- Shortness of breath
- Kidney failure
- Mortality only in severe cases

How can ICAS support you if you are concerned about possible Coronavirus symptoms?

ICAS as your employee service provider is available to you 24/7 to offer holistic support:

- Contact ICAS on your designated tollfree line selecting the medical advisory option to speak to our medical advisory team.
- The medical advisor will discuss your symptoms, your personal medical history and current health, recent travel, exposure to others who travelled recently, your exposure to individuals who appear to be ill and other factors in your immediate and extended



environment.

- You may require further testing pending the outcome of your telephonic triage session with the medical advisor.
- The medical advisor will discuss the importance of contacting a medical practitioner of your choice to schedule an appointment.
- It is important upon phoning to schedule an appointment to disclose that you are concerned about experiencing symptoms of the Coronavirus (COVID-19). The reason for disclosing this concern is to provide the health facility sufficient information to prepare for your consultation for your own safety and those of others.

What can I expect from my chosen health practitioner appointment?

The health professional will medically assess your symptoms and determine what test is best fitting for you. You may be requested to wear a mask during your appointment. Types of tests used to confirm whether you have the Coronavirus (COVID-19) includes:

- **Swab test:** a special swab will be used to take a sample from your nose or throat.
- **Nasal aspirate:** a saline solution will be injected into your nose, then removing the sample with gentle suction.
- **Tracheal aspirate:** a thin, lighted tube called a bronchoscope will be put down your mouth and into your lungs, where a sample will be collected.
- **Sputum test:** Sputum is thick mucus that is coughed up from the lungs. You may be asked to cough up sputum into a special cup, or a special swab may be used to take a sample from your nose.
- **Blood:** a blood sample from a vein in your arm may be taken.

There are limited risks to the above tests and discomfort is only temporary. Do discuss any such concerns with our medical advisory team as well as with your health practitioner at your appointment.

What will happen after my sample has been taken?

- You will now await the outcome of your test results.
- Your healthcare provider will provide expected timelines to confirm outcomes of your test.
- You may be advised to isolate yourself from your family/friends/colleagues until test results are obtained and confirmed.

What precautions should I be taking either whilst waiting for test results or proactively?

If you are advised to stay home please take the following steps to prevent others from potentially contracting the virus:

- Do not share crockery/cutlery/towels/bedding or other items in the home.
- Clean frequently touched objects/surfaces with disinfectant spray or wipes.
- Surgical masks have not been proven to definitively protect against every contagion. However, masks prevent a person from unconsciously touching their eyes, nose and mouth, so they may offer a measure of protection. Surgical masks are for single use only, not to be worn two days in a row.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Cough or sneeze into a tissue and dispose thereof safely
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for no less than 20 seconds. If you have none available use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.

What will happen if my test result is positive for the Coronavirus (COVID-19)?

- Your health practitioner will discuss your positive test results with you and explain what it means in detail.
- The health practitioner will explain that the results will be disclosed as it forms part of a notifiable disease. Disclosure takes place in accordance with the South African Health Department Standard Operating Procedures as well as all the requirements of the World Health Organisation requirements in managing the spread of the Coronavirus.
- Very specific instructions will be provided with regards to your admission at a health facility for isolation and treatment to support you in the best possible manner. South Africa has identified specific healthcare facilities for admission in every province and this will continue to be updated.
- Specific instructions will also be provided regarding logistics in traveling to the health facility for admission in accordance with South African EMS services for containment of the Coronavirus in specific. This means that you may either be asked to travel alone if you have your own transport as alternative arrangements will be confirmed with the EMS services. Public transport should be avoided at all costs if your test results confirmed positive for Coronavirus (COVID-10).
- You will be admitted and may expect additional test to be conducted during admission as well as during your stay as part of your treatment plan.
- The health practitioner may also insist that those you have interacted with also consult with a health practitioner as a precaution for testing if they are displaying symptoms.

Will anyone be notified?

Your treating health professional will notify the South African Department of Health representative for Coronavirus specifically in your relevant province. This is in accordance with the Standard Operating Procedures shared by the Department of Health for Corona Virus cases in South Africa. Additionally they will also notify the World Health Organisation.

Where can I access helpful links regarding the Coronavirus and the spread thereof?

- You may access the Global real-time report on confirmed Coronavirus cases on the following link: <https://infographics.channelnewsasia.com/covid-19/map.html>
- If you are a registered eCare user you may access the eCare toolkit via the following link:
<https://www.ecare4me.com/hbPreviewer/Preview?id=184802&memguid=cbb2a4f1-5938-4853-a8bc-64dbe7dfa5bb>
- You may access the World Health Organisations situation report updates on the following link: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/situation-reports>

ICAS holistic support

The process may be an emotionally trying process. You have access to our clinicians and medical advisory team 24/7 for support on your tollfree line.

