



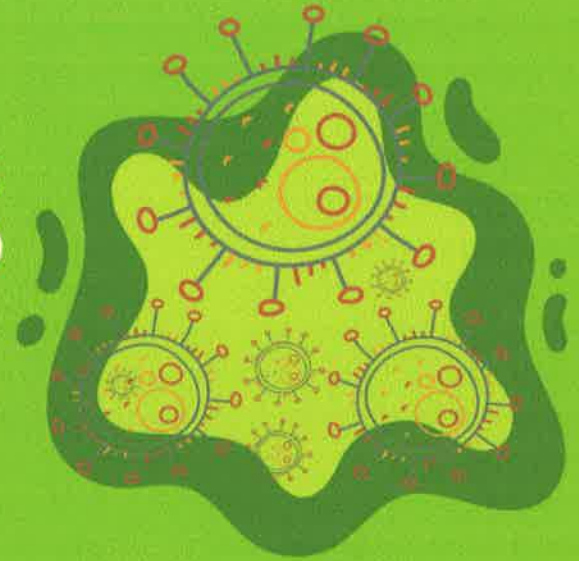
health

Department:  
Health  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



NATIONAL HEALTH  
LABORATORY SERVICE

# CORONAVIRUS COVID-19



## What are Coronaviruses?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that cause respiratory illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) and severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS). Coronaviruses are zoonotic, meaning they are transmitted between animals and people.

## What are the symptoms?

Symptoms can include fever, cough and shortness of breath. Symptoms may appear in as few as two days or as long as 14 days after exposure.

## How it is spread?

Human coronaviruses most commonly spread from an infected person to others through:

- The air by coughing and sneezing.
- Close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands.
- Touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes before washing your hands.
- Keep your distance. Maintain at least 1 metre distance between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing.

## What are the prevention measures?

There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19 disease. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to this virus.

There are certain steps you can take to reduce your exposure to SARS-CoV-2:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser.
- Cover your mouth and nose with your flexed elbow or a tissue. Throw away the tissue in a bin immediately and wash hands.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Clean and disinfect objects and surfaces that are frequently touched.
- Avoid close contact with anyone who has a fever and cough.