



## COMMUNIQUÉ TO THE CUT COMMUNITY

### WITH REGARD TO THE CORONA VIRUS

2020 #5

#### Dear CUT Community

The well-being of our staff and students are our highest priority at CUT. We therefore urge the entire CUT community to carefully note the content of this communiqué.

There is no reason for panic, and this communiqué merely serves to keep our community informed. Thus far, 29 case of the coronavirus has been reported in Sub-Saharan Africa. The Health Minister Zweli Mkhize has confirmed that South Africa has recorded its first positive test case for the COVID-19 Corona Virus. The patient is a 38-year old male who travelled to Italy with his wife. The tracer team has been deployed to KwaZulu-Natal with epidemiologists and clinicians from the NICD. The coronavirus has been reported in the following countries as shown below:

#### Coronavirus in Numbers (Updated March 05, 2020)

<b>Countries with Confirmed Cases</b>	<b>84</b>
<b>Global Confirmed Cases</b>	<b>96,766</b>
<b>Global Reported Deaths</b>	<b>3,311</b>
<b>Global Recoveries</b>	<b>53,423</b>

With 85 countries confirming coronavirus cases, and four countries reporting suspected cases, the outbreak has already placed the world on a public health high-alert.



Source: <https://www.Worldometers.info> (5 March 2020)

The danger of the virus is that it can spread easily. When an infected person coughs or exhales, they release droplets of infected fluid. Most of these droplets fall on nearby surfaces and objects, such as desks, tables or telephones. The coronavirus spreads in a similar way to flu. People can contract it by touching contaminated surfaces or objects, then touching their eyes, nose or mouth. Likewise, if they are standing within one metre of the disease, they can contract it by breathing in the droplets coughed out or exhaled.

Most people infected with the virus, which was first detected in Wuhan, China, experienced mild symptoms, and recovered. However, some experienced more severe symptoms, and required hospital care. The World Health Organization (WHO) states that the risk of becoming seriously ill increases with age. People with weakened immune systems, and people with conditions such as diabetes, heart and lung disease, are also more vulnerable to serious illness.

The measures recommended by WHO to make the workplace safer, can reduce the risk of attracting the corona virus as well as seasonal flu. It can also stop or slow down the spread of this and other diseases.

How do you know if you have COVID-19 (the coronavirus)?

- ❖ You will experience a sudden onset of fever (38 degrees and above).
- ❖ In addition, you will experience one or more of the following symptoms: fever; coughing; and/or difficulty breathing.

The most commonly reported symptoms include a fever, dry cough and tiredness. In the most severe cases, people with the virus can develop breathing difficulty, and may ultimately experience organ failure. The virus can cause pneumonia. As this is viral pneumonia, antibiotics are of no use. The antiviral drugs we have against flu will not work. Recovery depends on the strength of the immune system. Many of those who have died were already in poor health.

It is therefore of utmost importance that you take care of your general well-being. Boost your immune system by watching your diet and using multivitamins. Ensure that your workplace, including objects such as phones and keyboards, is clean and hygienic. This means regularly cleaning surfaces such as desks, tables and objects (such as telephones and keyboards) with disinfectant. The coronavirus appears to spread easily on surfaces touched by employees and customers. Capetonians are already used to waterless hand sanitisers in bathrooms, thanks to several years of drought. Putting such dispensers in prominent places around the workplace, or using mobile hand sanitiser wipes available at any retailer, e.g. Dis-Chem, Clicks, etc., is a good practice. The same can be said for encouraging regular hand washing with soap. The WHO recommends putting up posters to encourage hand washing and other hygienic practices.

Workplaces can ensure that face masks and paper tissues are available in offices. Paper masks may not be the most effective way to protect yourself from contracting a disease, but it reduces the spread of a disease if you are infected – even if you just have a common cold. Wash your hands thoroughly with soap/sanitiser after visiting any public place (e.g. bathrooms). Ensure that your hands are thoroughly washed after exposure to/contact with body fluid. Avoid touching your face (eyes, nose and mouth) before washing your hands. Ensure that floors in offices, corridors and facilities are cleaned daily, or as necessary, with a soap disinfectant. Damp-dusting using a lint-free cloth is essential. Brooms disperse dust and bacteria into the air, and should not be used in offices/facilities or clinical areas (e.g. the campus clinic). The following should be cleaned at least daily, and more frequently, as required: toilets, sinks, washbasins, baths and shower cubicles.

**An Incident Management Task Team was established at CUT for purposes of taking proactive steps to deal with incidents related to COVID-19 (the coronavirus).** The Incident Management Task Team consist of the following portfolios:

- ❖ Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Resources and Operations (Chairperson)
- ❖ Registrar
- ❖ Dean: Faculty of Health and Environmental Sciences
- ❖ Chief Risk Officer
- ❖ HOD of Health Sciences
- ❖ HOD of Environmental Health
- ❖ OHS Officer
- ❖ Manager: Wellness Centre
- ❖ Representatives of NEHAWU and NTEU
- ❖ Professional Nurses at both campuses
- ❖ SRC: Health at both campuses

Both Bloemfontein and Welkom campus clinics are on high alert and will implement all actions as prescribed by the National Department of Health. If you were in contact with someone who was positively diagnosed with the virus, or if you returned from an area where the virus is known to be spreading, do the following:

- ❖ Monitor yourself closely for at least 14 days.
- ❖ At any sign of the mentioned symptoms (even mild ones), contact your doctor or campus clinic, and wear a mask, if possible.
- ❖ Rather work from home until it is confirmed that you are not infected with the virus.

If you travel to an area where the virus was identified and are spreading, take all necessary precautions, as per your doctor's advice.

Please watch this video for more information:

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>

Keep yourselves safe!

**Prof. Henk de Jager**

Vice-Chancellor and Principal  
(5 March 2020)

## Coronavirus prevention



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 sanitizer.



Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.



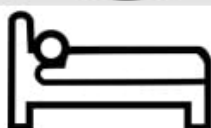
Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.



Avoid close contact with people who are sick.



Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.



Stay home when you are sick.

CBC NEWS