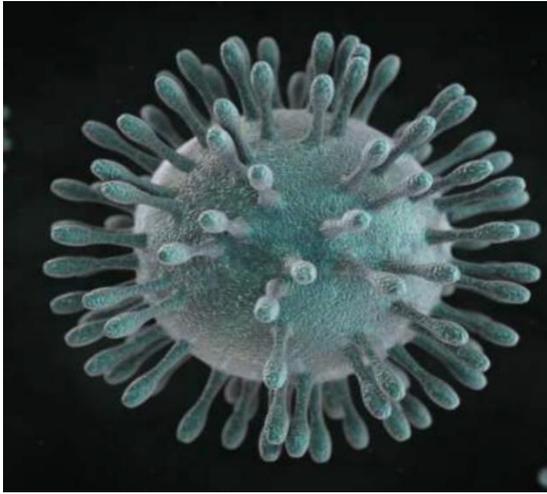


2019 - NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (2019-nCoV)
Now known as CORONA VIRUS DISEASE 2019
(COVID-19)



The name *Corona* is derived from the Latin Word Corona and the Greek word Korone which means a crown-like or halo morphology under electronic microscope. The Virus is therefore distinguished by this crown-like feature. The novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV), now officially known as the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-2019), was first detected in Wuhan City, Hubei Province in China in December 2019. It is a rapidly spreading virus which is reported to have started with more than 400 cases in January 2020. By early February 2020, the infected cases were reported to have breached the 1000 mark of affected persons, mostly in China. On January 30, 2020, the WHO declared the outbreak as a “Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC)” ([see World Health Organisation \(WHO\) link](#)). Unfortunately, a lot of conspiracy theories, rumours, innuendo and fake news have not helped but fueled the pandemic disease.

There is need to inform and reassure the HIT Community about this outbreak and likelihood of its spread to Africa and in Zimbabwe in particular. Raising Awareness therefore is the most effective form of disaster preparedness and prevention.

- Presently, at least by 13 February 2020, there were no reported cases of the COVID 2019 nor risk of infection in Zimbabwe.
- The University continues to monitor the situation closely and updates will be made to this communicate as soon as it is available.
- As advised by the Ministry of Health and Child Care (MoHCC) and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, staff and students are urged not to make unnecessary travels to China and other areas affected by the outbreak.
- If you feel ill, and have been to China in the past few weeks, or have had contact with someone who was there, seek medical attention urgently, stating clearly your exposure and symptoms.
- Staff and students can visit the Campus Clinic in Hostel 4 or call Nursing Sister on Emergency Number 311, or call landline on 0242-741426-37 Ext. 2217, OR for resident

students, you can reach your Hostel Wardens or Dean of Students on Campus. For non-resident students you can Call an Ambulance that will take you to 4th Street CIMAS Clinic and/or Beatrice Infectious Diseases Hospital (BIDH).

- Learn more about the virus and be armed with the latest and official developments by visiting the relevant [WHO website](#), the HIT Clinic, and the MoHCC website and offices.

MORE ABOUT THE NOVEL CORONAVIRUS:

- The coronavirus family of viruses includes the common cold, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome-Coronavirus (MERS-CoV). The new virus was initially named “**2019-nCoV**”, meaning the **2019 Novel CoronaVirus**. It was recently officially termed the Coronavirus Diseases 2019 (COVID-2019) in Windhoek. (for more information on the virus, visit the WHO website)
- As new research about the novel coronavirus is still emerging, it is thought that person-to-person infection occurs via respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes – similar to how influenza and other respiratory pathogens spread.
- It is highlighted that there is no evidence yet to suggest that the virus is air borne hence easily spread very far and wide like chicken pox.
- It is instead transmitted via droplets over short distances especially as the drops get in contact with mouth, nose, face and hands which touch infected surfaces and these in turn touch the face, nose and mouth or food that is then ingested.
- The virus is found in drops that fall on surfaces and remains alive for a few days so that when one touches that surface, one gets affected. Surgical Masks alone do not prevent infection. One has to touch that surface and touches their face, nose and mouth to be affected.
- A person becomes **Symptomatic** when infected with the virus. This means that the virus is highly transmissible when a person is displaying symptoms or symptomatic. It is a human-to-human transmissible disease.
- Patients with COVID-2019 have mainly presented with fairly mild respiratory illness. But in severe cases, this leads to pneumonia and even death. Elderly people and those with underlying illness seem to have a higher risk of severe illness and death. The following are the expected symptoms of the infection:
 - Fever;
 - Cough;
 - Severe pneumonia;
 - Acute Respiratory distress and shortness of breath;
 - Septic shock; and
 - Multi-organ failure.
- When one is infected and has to go and see a doctor, then one must wear a surgical mask.
- People are said to be **Asymptomatic** when they do not exhibit symptoms of the virus.
- It is unknown whether **asymptomatic people** can infect others, i.e. whether persons not exhibiting symptoms can actually infect others.
- There is no risk of infection with the COVID-2019 in Zimbabwe at present (by 18 February 2020) as there have not been any confirmed cases.
- In order to minimize the risk of becoming infected or spreading the virus, the following common hygiene practices **MUST be practised**:

- Frequently wash your hands using alcohol-based hand sanitisers or soap and water;
- Do not touch your face, nose and mouth;
- If symptomatic, cover your mouth with a cloth, surgical mask or with the inside of your elbow when coughing or sneezing;
- Rest at home if you have a fever or cough.

More information

- [World Health Organisation](#) (WHO)
- Ministry of Health and Child Care (MoHCC)
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Photo: Centres for Disease Control and Prevention ([link for information](#))