

TALKING POINTS

Background

China reported to the World Health Organization (WHO) about an outbreak of a new Coronavirus (COVID-19) in Wuhan city, Hubei Province. In January 2020, the World Health Organization declared the Coronavirus disease 'A Public Health Emergency of international concern'. Since the initial reports, the disease has now spread to countries across Asia, Europe, North America, Middle East and Africa.

The Ministry of Health Kenya, confirmed a corona virus disease case in Nairobi on 12th march 2020. It was the first reported case in Kenya since the beginning of the outbreak in China. The Government of Kenya (GoK) through the Ministry of Health (MoH) is strengthening measures to prevent spread of disease.

What is coronavirus

- **Coronaviruses** are a large family of viruses that cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases.
- COVID-19 is a new viral disease leading to respiratory complications and could lead to death mainly among the elderly and those suffering from other immune deficiency illness or chronic illnesses.
- Incubation period for COVID-19 range from 1-14 days, but most commonly five days.

Treatment

- There is as yet **no vaccine** and **no specific antiviral medicine** to prevent or treat COVID -19.
- Efforts are underway to produce one. However, those affected should receive treatment and care to relieve the symptoms.
- Most patients recover because of supportive care.
- There are several possible vaccines and specific drug treatments under investigation and these are being tested through clinical trials.
- The most effective way to protect yourself and others against COVID -19 is to frequently **clean your hands**, **cover your cough** with the bend of elbow or tissue, and **maintain a distance of at least 1 meter (3 feet)** from people who are coughing or sneezing.

Coronavirus symptoms

- Common Symptoms of COVID -19 include fever, cough, headache, difficulty in breathing and sneezing.
- These may appear within 14 days of infection.
- If you suspect COVID -19 infection, practice self-quarantine and call the emergency number *719# and wait for further directive.

How it is spread

- The virus can be transmitted from person to person, usually after close contact with an infected patient.
- It can spread from person to person through small droplets from the nose or mouth which spread when a person with COVID-19 coughs or exhales.
- Other people catch COVID-19 by touching these objects or surfaces, then touching their eyes, nose or mouth.
- People can also contract COVID -19 if they breathe - in droplets from a person who coughs out or exhales these droplets.

Prevention

- Regularly wash your hands with soap and running water or use an alcohol based sanitizer.
- Washing your hands with soap and water or using alcohol-based hand rub kills viruses that may be on your hands.
- Cough or sneeze into a disposable tissue, flexed elbow or clothing and wash your hands immediately with soap and running water.
- When someone coughs or sneezes they spray small liquid droplets from their nose or mouth which may contain virus.
- If you are too close, you can breathe in the droplets, including the COVID-19 virus if the person coughing has the disease.
- Maintain at least 1 metre (3 feet) distance between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing.
- Stay home and avoid travelling when you have flu-like symptoms.
- If you have a fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical attention and call in advance

- Avoid handshakes, hugging or kissing with persons with flu-like symptoms.
- Frequently wash your hands, and avoid touching your eyes, nose, mouth and face with fluids from cough or sneezes.

How to reduce chances of being infected or spreading COVID-19?

Keep up to date on the latest COVID-19 hot spots (cities or local areas where COVID-19 is spreading widely).

If possible, avoid traveling to places – especially if you are an older person or have diabetes, heart or lung disease.

Note: National and County authorities will have the most upto - date information on the situation in your area. Calling in advance will allow your health care provider to quickly direct you to the right health facility. This will also protect you and help prevent spread of viruses and other infections.