HEALTH FACT SHEET

ANVIL | ASSIST

COVID-19

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses which may cause illness in animals or humans. In humans, several coronaviruses are known to cause respiratory infections ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, and most recently coronavirus disease termed COVID-19 by the World Health Organisation.

Transmission

The disease spreads primarily from person to person through small droplets from the nose or mouth, which are expelled when a person with COVID-19 coughs, sneezes, or speaks. These droplets are relatively heavy, do not travel far and quickly sink to the ground. People can catch COVID-19 if they breathe in these droplets from a person infected with the virus.

General Information

Infection with COVID-19 can be asymptomatic and is largely a mild infection, but it can also cause life threatening pneumonia and multiorgan failure in a small minority of people. Until mass testing for current (antigen test, swab) and past (antibody test, blood) infection, as well as vaccinations are available on a global scale, administrative controls (questionnaires, temperature checks, social distancing, hand washing) and engineering (PPE) controls will remain place for some time to mitigate against the hazard of transmitting this virus.

Each of these measures in isolation are moderately effective, but taken as a package, they make it virtually impossible to transmit SARS-CoV-2 infection.

Prevention

Government guidelines vary from country to country, but the principles are similar.

- Stay at home if you can
- Wash your hands for more than 20 seconds with soap and water and if this is not available use hand sanitiser containing at least 60% alcohol.
- Limit contact with other people
- Work from home if you can
- Keep your distance when you go out
- Meet other people outdoors

Symptoms

The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, dry cough, and tiredness. Other symptoms that are less common and may affect some patients include aches and pains, nasal congestion, headache, conjunctivitis, sore throat, diarrhoea, loss of taste or smell or a rash on skin or discoloration of fingers or toes. These symptoms are usually mild and begin gradually. Some people become infected but only have very mild symptoms.

Most people (80%) recover from the disease without needing hospital treatment. Of those admitted to hospital, 80% are discharged within a short period of time. Only a very small percentage become seriously ill, requiring treatment in intensive care.

Diagnosis

Most people experience minor symptoms, such as a cough or a fever, and there is generally no need to seek medical assistance.

Our advice is to stay at home, self-isolate and monitor your symptoms. Follow national guidance on self-isolation for your country.

The time between exposure to COVID-19 and the moment when symptoms start is commonly around five to six days but can range from 1 — 14 days.

Antigen Testing

Antigen tests are offered to people who:

- have corona virus symptoms now
- live with someone who has coronavirus symptoms

Testing for current infection is widely available and is done by a throat and nose swab. This is an unpleasant, but not painful procedure and takes a few minutes to carry out. The test is sent to an accredited laboratory and usually takes between 24 to48 hours to obtain a result.

This test is done to find out whether someone who experiencing symptoms of an upper respiratory tract infection is infected with coronavirus at the time of testing. If the test is negative, the person is likely to suffer from another viral respiratory tract infection.

An antigen test can be repeated if new symptoms develop.

Antibody Testing

The immune system produces antibodies when it is fighting an infection. Serology testing detects these antibodies, within blood, which remain after recovery from an infection, giving an indication of previous COVID-19 infection.

The test is a laboratory test, which requires a healthcare professional to procure a small sample of blood which is sent to the laboratory for analysis.

Antibody Testing cont/d

These tests have been approved by Public Health England (PHE) and authorised by the FDA (USA). Utilising specific testing equipment, only available in laboratories, these tests are proven to be over 99% accurate.

Vaccination

The COVID-19 vaccine is designed to protect you from getting severe COVID-19 disease and to prevent death. If you are allergic to other vaccines, please consult with your doctor. All medical treatment requires personal choices and individualised medical guidance.

Vaccines train your immune system so your body will be ready to fight the virus if you are exposed to it. You cannot transmit COVID-19 from vaccines, as none of the vaccines contain live virus. You may still test positive for COVID-19 infection following vaccination, although this will be much rarer.

Getting vaccinated protects health services globally to deliver other needed medical care, prevents financial hardship and honours the volunteers who have allowed the vaccines to be developed!