**INFORMATION FOR PARENTS OF YOUNG CHILDREN ON THE CORONA VIRUS**

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Based on the WHO guidelines

**WHAT IS THE CORONAVIRUS OR COVID-19?**

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses which may cause illnesses that are known to cause infections that impacts on your lungs and your breathing. These include the common cold, flu and serious forms of pneumonia.

The most recently discovered coronavirus causes coronavirus disease COVID-19 and it was unknown before the outbreak began in Wuhan, China, in December 2019.

**SYMPTOMS (signs of infection)**

The symptoms (the signs that show that a person may be infected with the virus) are very similar to that of a common cold or flu. It may include signs such a fever, feeling tired, coughing, aches and pains, nasal congestion (also called a stuffy nose), runny nose, sore throat or diarrhea (a runny tummy). If you, your child or any family member show any of these signs, please seek medical attention.

Do not panic! Your health care practitioner will do the necessary examinations, tests and provide you with all the information that you need.

**IMPORTANT:** Do not self-medicate! Call your clinic or doctor ahead of your visit or the National Insitute Communicable Diseases (NICD) hotline 0800 029 999

**Did you know?** Most people, about 8 in every 10, recover from this disease without getting very ill or needing special treatment.

**PROTECT AND PREVENT**

**1. START WITH YOUR HANDS:**

**Did you know?** Most infections are spread through your hands and the hands of others? That is why keeping your hands clean is the easiest and most effective way to prevent that you pick up germs and viruses that will make you ill.

**1.1 WASH YOUR HANDS WITH SOAP REGULARLY**

Handwashing with soap is the best way to prevent the spread of germs and viruses. Wash your hands regularly with soap and running water for 20 seconds. The easiest way to know how long 20 seconds are, is to sing ‘happy birthday’ two times or to sing the first verse of our national anthem, Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika.

**Remember**, wash your hands with soap and assist your child to wash his or her hands properly with soap. This will not only help with the prevention of diseases but creates healthy habits that will last a lifetime.

**Did you know?** Regularly washing your bare hands with soap offers more protection against catching the COVID-19 than wearing gloves (WHO).

**1.2 From the HANDS to the EYES, MOUTH AND NOSE**

When our hands are not clean and we touch our (or other people’s) eyes, nose or mouth we spread germs and viruses. Try to avoid touching your or your child’s eyes, nose or mouth unnecessarily, and if you must, wash your hands before you touch these areas. Teach this also to you child from a young age. Another healthy habit that will last a lifetime.

**Did you know?** Our hands touch many surfaces and objects every day. This is how germs and viruses get from these surfaces and objects to our hands – and then when we touch our eyes, nose or mouth, these germs and viruses enters our bodies.

**1.3 From HAND TO HAND**

When we greet each other, we often do that by shaking hands or hugging. It is time to learn a new way of greeting that will help us to protect ourselves from germs and viruses. It is called the ‘elbow greet’.

**Do it like this:** Bent your arm and extend your elbow to the person that you want to greet. He or she should do the same. Then you greet by touching elbows. It’s cool. And we should teach our children to do the same.

**2. COUGHING**

When we cough and sneeze, droplets leave our mouths and noses into the air – about one meter around us. If you cough or sneeze cover your nose and mouth with a flexed elbow or tissue. Remember to throw the tissue away in closed dustbin after it was used. Teach you child to do the same when he or she coughs or sneezes.

**Remember:** Wash your hands every time after you have coughed or sneezed. And teach your child the same habit. *Another healthy habit to learn from an early age*.

**3. ONE METER DISTANCE**

Keep one (1) meter distance between yourself and anyone who is coughing and sneezing. The droplets from a sneeze or cough cannot travel that far in the air! Avoid touching people unnecessarily.

**4. AVOID CROWDED PLACES**

In crowded places like shopping centres, places of worship, community gatherings, and others, we are very close to other people. Lots of people touch the same surfaces that we do, coughs, sneezes and are very, very close to us. This creates opportunities for germs and viruses to spread very quickly. If you can, avoid these places or go at times when there are not many people.

**5. STAY AT HOME WHEN SICK**

If you feel sick or your child feels sick - stay at home. In this way you protect yourself, your child as well as other people. Remember to seek medical help immediately as well. Do not go back to work if you have not fully recovered or send your child back to early childhood development programme or school before he or she has not fully recovered.

**6. IF YOU OR YOUR CHILD HAVE COVID-19 (the new Coronavirus)**

If your health care practitioner confirms that you or your child have the COVID-19 (newest Coronavirus) do not panic. They will tell you what to do and prescribe any medication that you or your child may need. Here are a few things to keep in mind:

* Eat healthy (this helps the body to fight the virus)
* Drink lots of fluid
* Avoid contact with other people (in this way we prevent other people from getting the virus too)
* Engage with your child and tell him or her about his or her illness in a calm and comforting manner
* Stay at home until fully recovered
* Monitor the symptoms. If it gets worse contact your health care provider.