**Coronavirus disease (COVID-19)**

**General Information**

A coronavirus is a kind of common virus that causes an infection to the nose, sinuses or upper throat. Most coronaviruses are not dangerous.

In early 2020, after a December 2019 outbreak in China, the World Health Organization identified SARS-CoV-2 as a new type of coronavirus. The outbreak quickly spread around the world, claiming numerous lives in its path.

COVID-19 is a disease caused by SARS-CoV-2 that can trigger a respiratory tract infection. It can affect the upper respiratory tract (sinuses, nose and throat) or the lower respiratory tract (windpipe and lungs).

It spreads the same way other coronaviruses do, which is mainly through person-to-person contact. Infections range from mild to deadly, depending on a variety of factors, like one’s health condition.

SARS-CoV-2 is one of seven types of coronavirus, which among others include the ones causing severe diseases like Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) and sudden acute respiratory syndrome (SARS). The other coronaviruses cause most of the colds that affect us during the year but are not generally deemed a serious threat for otherwise healthy people.

**Global Situation**

Globally, as of 11:55am CET, 27 January 2021, there have been 99,638,507 confirmed cases of COVID-19, including 2,141,468 deaths, reported to WHO.

**Symptoms**

COVID-19 affects different people in various ways. Most infected people will develop mild to moderate illness and recover without any need for hospitalization. However, older people and those with underlying medical problems like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease and cancer, are more likely to develop serious illness.

The most common symptoms are:

* Fever
* Dry cough
* Fatigue

Other symptoms that are less common include:

* Loss of taste or smell
* Nasal congestion
* Conjunctivitis (also known as red eyes)
* Sore throat
* Headache
* Muscle or joint pain
* Different types of skin rash
* Nausea or vomiting
* Diarrhea
* Chills or dizziness

Symptoms of sever disease include:

* Shortness of breath
* Loss of appetite
* Confusion
* Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
* High temperature (above 38 oC)

Other less common symptoms are:

* Irritability
* Confusion
* Reduced consciousness (sometimes associated with seizures)
* Anxiety
* Depression
* Sleep disorders
* More severe and rare neurological complications such as strokes, brain inflammation, delirium and nerve damage

Seek immediate medical attention in case you have serious symptoms. Always call prior to visiting your doctor or health facility.

People with mild symptoms who are otherwise healthy should manage their symptoms at home and remain in constant communication with their doctor.

On average, it takes 5–6 days from the moment someone is infected with the virus for symptoms to show, however it can also take up to 14 days, on occasion.

**Prevention**

To prevent infection and to slow transmission of COVID-19, the following are advised:

* Wash your hands regularly. Use soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub.
* Maintain at least two meters distance from anyone coughing or sneezing.
* Avoid touching your face.
* Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.
* Stay home if you feel unwell.
* Refrain from smoking and other activities that weaken the lungs.
* Practice physical distancing by avoiding unnecessary travel and staying away from large groups of people.