

# COVID-19 UPDATE

25 February , 2020

As of 25 February 2020, the National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD), a division of the National Health Laboratory Service, has tested a total of 119 people for SARS-CoV-2 of whom 77 met the case definition for persons under investigation (PIU). As of 24 February 2020, all results have been negative. The NICD is currently the only laboratory performing testing for SARS-CoV-2 and can confirm that South Africa has not had a laboratory-confirmed case of COVID-19. Despite this, we have noted with concern the disturbing stigmatization against people from affected areas which now includes countries in Asia, Europe and the Middle East. Stigma has the potential to drive people to hide their illness to avoid discrimination and to further prevent people from seeking healthcare. This can lead to difficulties in identifying and controlling the spread of COVID-19 should it reach our shores.

Given that COVID-19 is a new disease, it is understandable that its emergence and possible importation into South Africa may cause confusion, anxiety and fear among the general public; however, viruses do not target people from specific populations, ethnicities, or racial backgrounds and we urge the public to desist from participating in stereotyping and discriminating against an identifiable group of people, a place, or a nation.

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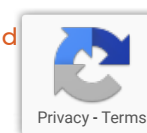


### COVID-19 update

March 27, 2020

The number of COVID-19 cases has increased by 243 as of 27 March 2020, bringing

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Anyone who develops symptoms of respiratory illness including cough, fever and shortness of breath either during and or after recent (within last 14 days) travel to countries where COVID-19 is known to be circulating (which as of February 24 includes mainland China, Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, Japan, Iran and Italy) must seek medical care early and share information about their travel history with their healthcare providers. The General Public Hotline Number is **0800 029 999** and operates on weekdays, Monday to Friday, during 08h00 to 16h00.

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March 26, 2020

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