

NOTICE: CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) TESTING FOR MEMBERS



19 March 2020

Dear Valued NMC Member,

THE FOLLOWING IS IN PLACE UNTIL SUCH TIME AS THE NATIONAL GUIDELINES HAVE BEEN PUBLISHED BY THE NAMIBIAN GOVERNMENT.

Please note the following criteria for laboratory testing for Coronavirus (COVID-19) as per World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines:

1. A patient with acute respiratory tract infection (sudden onset of at least one of the following: cough, fever, shortness of breath) AND with no other cause that fully explains the clinical presentation AND with a history of travel or residence in a country/area reporting local or community transmission during the 14 days prior to symptom onset;

OR

2. A patient with any acute respiratory illness AND having been in close contact* with confirmed or probable COVID-19 case in the last 14 days prior to onset of symptoms;

OR

3. A patient with severe acute respiratory infection (fever and at least one sign/symptom of respiratory disease (e.g. cough, fever, shortness of breath) AND requiring hospitalisation AND with no other cause that fully explains the clinical presentation

***Definition of close contact:**

- A person living in the same household as a COVID-19 case;
- A person having had direct physical contact with infectious secretions of a COVID-19 case (e.g. being coughed on, touching used paper tissues with a bare hand);
- A person having had face-to face contact with a COVID-19 case within 2 meters and for 15 minutes or more;
- A person who was in a closed environment (e.g. classroom, meeting room, hospital waiting room, etc.) with a COVID-19 case for 15 minutes or more and at a distance of less than 2 meters;
- A healthcare worker or other person providing direct care for a COVID-19 case, or laboratory workers handling specimens from a COVID-19 case without recommended personal protective equipment or with a possible breach of personal protective equipment;
- A contact in an aircraft sitting within two seats (in any direction) of the COVID-19 case, travel companions or persons providing care, and crew members serving in the section of the aircraft where the index case was seated (if severity of symptoms or movement of the case indicate more extensive exposure, passengers seated in the entire section of all passengers on the aircraft may be considered close contacts.

Please refer below the link to the WHO website for more information on COVID-19:

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>

You will need to contact your doctor who will then assess your condition. If you meet any of the above criteria, your doctor will refer you to a laboratory for testing. Currently, the Namibia Institute of Pathology (NIP) and Pathcare do the testing. Please note however, that testing is not by demand. If you are referred by your doctor for testing but based on assessment you do not meet any of the above criteria, they may refuse to conduct the test.

Please note you will be required to pay upfront for the COVID-19 test, and the Fund will only refund the cost for the testing if you are positive.

FOR THE SAFETY OF OUR EMPLOYEES AND OTHER CLIENTS, PLEASE DO NOT TAKE THE COMPLETED COVID-19 REFERRAL FORMS TO ANY METHEALTH OFFICES. PLEASE GO TO PATHCARE OR NIP TESTING CENTERS.

IMPORTANT: We cannot emphasise enough the importance of preventative measures to protect yourself from contracting the virus:

- Wash your hands regularly and with plenty of soap and water.
- Keep an alcohol-based sanitiser ready at all times and frequently clean your hands.
- Don't touch your eyes, mouth or nose with unclean hands.
- Keep your distance at least a meter from anyone coughing or sneezing.
- Follow no-touch greeting.
- Avoid going to public places and minimise contact with the general public.
- Keep a distance of 2 meters from other people in crowded areas.

NMC is currently engaging with relevant stakeholders to get clarity on the funding of the COVID-19 test and treatment in the event of confirmed diagnosis and will keep you updated on any developments.

We would like to encourage our members to remain calm and avoid spreading information regarding the Coronavirus from unreliable source.

For any enquiries, please contact Methealth Namibia Administrators' Client Service Department at **061-287 6000** or e-mail us at enquiries@methealth.com.na.

Yours Sincerely,

Namibia Medical Care (NMC)

