



UNFPA BOTSWANA COVID-19

KEY MESSAGES





Guidance for managing COVID-19



How does COVID-19 Spread?

- The virus can spread from one person to another through small droplets from the nose or mouth which are spread when a COVID-19 infected person coughs or exhales.
- These droplets land on objects and surfaces, and other people then catch COVID-19 by touching these objects or surfaces, then touching their eyes, nose or mouth or breathing droplets from the infected person's coughs.



What can I do if I suspect I have COVID-19?

- Stay at home (Do not go to work, school or public spaces) to avoid possible transmission to others.
- Seek guidance from the designated COVID-19 hotlines(997/3632756/3632757/3632773)
- Self isolate for 14 days after recovery.
- Do not refuse COVID-19 testing.
- Testing positive for COVID-19 is not a death sentence. Many patients who received appropriate supportive care have recovered from the disease and are alive.



What can I do to protect others from COVID-19

- Wash your hands regularly with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer (99% alcohol)
- Clean surfaces at home and work such as kitchen tops and workstations regularly with alcohol-based solutions.
- Cough or sneeze into your sleeve or use a tissue.
- Dispose of the tissues immediately into a rubbish bin and wash hands immediately.
- Avoid going into public places if you have a cough or fever.



Homecare for COVID-19 patients

- The patient and the family should be provided with ongoing support, education and monitoring until the patient's symptoms have completely resolved and retest negative.
- The patient should be placed in a well-ventilated separate room.
- The number of caregivers should be limited to one person, ideally a person with no underlying health conditions.
- Wash hands regularly with soap and water after any type of contact with patients or their immediate environment.
- Patient should cover their nose and mouth with tissue when coughing or sneezing and these should be discarded properly after use. Materials such as handkerchiefs should be washed regularly with soap and water.



Is it safe to go to the health facilities for other ailments?

- The government of Botswana has set up mechanisms to separate COVID-19 patients from other patients, so patients should not miss doctors' appointments such as ante-natal, and prenatal checkups on account of fear of COVID-19 infection.



People with Underlying Medical Conditions

- People of all ages can be infected by COVID-19.
- The risk of becoming severely ill with the virus appears to increase if you are older than 60.
- People with pre-existing non-communicable diseases such as chronic respiratory diseases, diabetes, cancer, cardiovascular diseases etc. also appear to be more vulnerable to becoming severely ill.



Tips for people with Non-Communicable Diseases

- Continue to take your medication and follow medical advice. Secure a one month supply of your medication or longer if possible.
- Keep a distance of at least 1 metre from people with a cough, cold or flu symptoms.
- Wash hands regularly with soap and water.



Risk factors that make people more vulnerable to becoming severely ill

- Smokers are likely to be more vulnerable to COVID-19 as they may have lung disease or reduced lung capacity which would greatly increase the risk of serious illness.
- Smoking products often involve sharing of the mouth pieces and hoses, which could facilitate the transmission of COVID-19 in social settings.
- The act of smoking means that fingers and possibly contaminated cigarettes are in contact with lips, which increases the possibility of transmission of COVID from hand to mouth.



Health Tips

A healthy lifestyle will make all body functions work better and boost immunity. Key components of a healthy lifestyle are:

- Keep physically active.
- Eat healthy diets.
- Quit smoking.
- Limit alcohol intake.
- Get enough rest/sleep.
- Wash hands with soap and water.



Gender, Youth & Sexual Reproductive Health

Main source: UNFPA



Adolescents & Young People & COVID-19

- Young people exposed to COVID-19 are as likely as older people to become infected and contagious. They should therefore strictly follow WHO, Ministry of health and Wellness and government of Botswana guidelines to prevent exposure to the virus and reduce the risk of infection.
- Young people can play an important role in mitigating risks and community outreach in times of crisis. With the right training on COVID-19 and its transmission, young people can work with health authorities to help reduce the spread of infection.
- In times of crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic, young people and adolescents have specific needs, including sexual and reproductive health needs, and may not be able to access services and support if health facilities, youth serving organizations and schools are closed.
- School closures and movement restrictions may lead to emotional unrest and an increased risk of violence at home.
- Some young people are at an increased risk of contracting the virus or suffering disproportionately from its effects, such as adolescent girls, young people with disabilities, young people with HIV, and young single parent mothers.



Modern Contraceptives and other medical supply needs

- Family planning information, counselling and services including emergency contraception are lifesaving and should be available and accessible during the COVID-19 pandemic response.



Maternal & Newborn Health & COVID-19

- To date, there is no scientific evidence about the increased susceptibility of pregnant women to COVID-19. There is also no evidence to support vertical mother to child transmission of COVID-19.
- Pregnant women should take the same preventative actions to avoid infection recommended for all adults.
- Continuity of maternal health and other sexual and reproductive health services, including antenatal and postnatal care and access to safe birth, must be maintained.
- Antenatal, neonatal and maternal health units must be segregated from identified COVID-19 cases.
- Pregnant women with respiratory illnesses must be treated with utmost priority due to increased risk of adverse outcomes.
- Pregnant women with symptoms of COVID-19 should be prioritized for testing.
- Health workers including midwives must be protected from contracting COVID-19 and be provided with personal protective equipment to treat infected patients.



Gender Equality and Addressing Gender Based Violence (GBV) and COVID-19

- In times of crisis such as disease outbreaks and pandemics, women and girls may be at a higher risk of intimate partner violence and other forms of domestic violence.
- Women can be less likely than men to have power in decision making around the outbreak, and as a consequence their sexual and reproductive health needs may go unmet.
- Life-saving care and support to gender based violence survivors, such as psychosocial support and clinical management of rape, must remain available.
- The COVID-19 pandemic may increase women's domestic burden, making their share of household responsibilities even heavier. Boys and men play a critical support role in sharing domestic burden.
- Women represent 70% of the global health and social sector workforce. Special attention should be given to their health and psychological needs as frontline health workers, as well as to how their work environment may expose them to illness and discrimination.
- As family tensions rise due to economic stress, women and children are at a heightened risk of domestic violence.
- Call Botswana Police- 0800 600 144, Botswana Gender Based Violence Prevention & Support Centre 74265081/ 71888993 or send HELP to 16510 (accessible 24hours), Women Against Rape 71311244/71525309, Childline Botswana 11611 (24hour service), BOSASNet 72659891 or LEGABIBO 76391762/ 76488051 when you identify or suspect any case of violence.



Census and COVID-19

- Efforts must be made to ensure that even where census is delayed, census planning and preparations are not cancelled, but continue apace in order to safely proceed with implementation when the pandemic is under control.
- While new census methods, including online, register-based and hybrid approaches are being used across the world, these demand extensive planning and preconditions that cannot be created at short notice. Hence National Statistic Offices are discouraged from shifting to new census approaches that have not been planned well in advance. A simple postponement of the planned census approach is most prudent.



What UNFPA Botswana is doing in response to COVID-19

- Advocating for support for gender based violence survivors.
- Advocating for continued maternal and sexual reproductive health services.
- Advocating for continued access and supply of modern contraception.
- Supporting the government in ensuring that (as far as possible) essential supplies are bought and delivered without interruption.
- Provide risk communication and community engagement for primary COVID-19 prevention and stigma reduction.





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