Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) and You

What is coronavirus disease 2019?
The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus that was first identified during an investigation into an outbreak in Wuhan, China.

Can people in Zambia get COVID-19?
COVID-19 is spreading from person to person in China, and limited spread among close contacts has been detected in some countries outside China. Right now, the greatest risk of infection is for people who have traveled to China. Risk of infection is dependent on exposure. Close contacts of people who are infected are at greater risk of exposure, for example health care workers and close contacts of people who are infected with the virus that causes COVID-19. ZNPHI continues to closely monitor the situation.

Have there been cases of COVID-19 in the Zambia?
No. No known cases of COVID-19 have been detected in Zambia. However, it is possible this could change in the coming days or weeks, as the virus has already spread to many other countries around the world.

How does COVID-19 spread?
The virus that causes COVID-19 probably emerged from an animal source, but now it seems to be spreading from person to person. It’s important to note that person-to-person spread can happen on a continuum. Some diseases are highly contagious (like measles), while other diseases are less so. At this time, it’s unclear how easily or sustainably the virus that causes COVID-19 is spreading between people. Learn what is known about the spread of newly emerged coronaviruses at: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/transmission.html.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?
Patients with COVID-19 have had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of:
- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

What are severe complications from this virus?
Many patients have pneumonia in both lungs.

How can I help protect myself?
This virus is not spreading in Zambia right now. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19.

There are simple everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses. These include:
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.

If you are sick, to keep from spreading respiratory illness to others, you should:
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

What should I do if I recently traveled to China and got sick?
If you were in China within the past 14 days and feel sick with fever, cough, or difficulty breathing, you should get medical care. Call the office of your health care provider before you go and tell them about your travel and your symptoms. They will give you instructions on how to get care without exposing other people to your illness. While sick, avoid contact with people, don’t go out, and delay any travel to reduce the possibility of spreading illness to others.

Is there a vaccine?
There is currently no vaccine to protect against COVID-19. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to this virus.

Is there a treatment?
There is no specific antiviral treatment for COVID-19. People with COVID-19 can seek medical care to help relieve symptoms.