

# Responses to Myths, Rumours, Concerns and Questions of People on COVID-19

## A Guide for Professionals Working with PLHIV

This handout succinctly provides information on COVID-19, its spread and symptoms particularly in the context of HIV. It also dispels the common myths, rumours and questions around COVID-19. The handout is meant for professionals and service providers working with PLHIV.

COVID-19 outbreak has given rise to many myths, rumours and questions due to absence of correct and adequate knowledge about its spread and symptoms. This creates fear and leads to stigma and discrimination and obstruct the efforts driven towards effective management of the disease. The importance of correct information on COVID-19 is even more crucial in case of PLHIV. Due to their pre-existing health conditions, PLHIV may experience increased fear and vulnerability and may not be able to access health services such as ART and counselling. Therefore, it is important that professionals working with PLHIV are equipped with correct knowledge to help counter the fear and stigma around the diseases.



### What is COVID-19?

- COVID-19 is a disease caused by a new corona virus
- Virus belongs to the same family of viruses as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and some types of influenza (flu) or common cold
- COVID-19 - 'CO' stands for corona, 'VI' for virus, and 'D' for disease and 19 as it reported in 2019

### How does COVID-19 virus spread?

The virus is transmitted through



- direct contact with respiratory droplets of an infected person generated through coughing and sneezing



- touching surfaces contaminated with the virus

Corona virus may survive on surfaces for several hours, but simple disinfectants can kill it

#TogetherAgainstCOVID19



### What are the symptoms?

Symptoms of COVID-19 are similar to the flu or the common cold. They can include

- fever
- cough
- shortness of breath
- pneumonia or breathing difficulties in severe cases

In rare cases the disease can be fatal.



### How to identify if a person is infected?

Only testing can confirm if someone has COVID-19



### How to prevent the spread of infection?

Remember that key prevention measures are:



Wash your hands frequently with soap and water after sneezing and coughing, touching surfaces, before and after meal



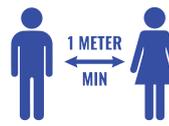
Cover your mouth with handkerchief/ tissue while coughing and sneezing, wash used handkerchief thoroughly and dispose of tissue in a covered bin immediately after use



Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth



Use mask while stepping out



Maintain at least 1 metre distance in market places, medical stores, hospitals, etc.



Avoid participating in large gatherings



Self monitor your health and contact a doctor immediately if you have cough, fever or breathing difficulty



If you have these signs/symptoms call State helpline number or Ministry of Health and Family Welfare's 24X7 helpline at 011-23978046

### Responses to some commonly asked questions by PLHIV



If I think I have corona should I go to the hospitals or clinics considering treatment capacity?

- Stay home in separate room away from other family members if you have only fever, cough and body ache
- wash hands frequently
- cover mouth and nose while coughing or sneezing
- Go to the doctor if you feel difficulty in breathing



Can virus spread through flies?

COVID-19 IS NOT transmitted through houseflies

	Can regularly rinsing nose with saline help prevent COVID-19?	No. There is no evidence that regularly rinsing the nose with saline has protected people from COVID-19
	Can hot weather stop spread of coronavirus?	From the evidence so far, the COVID-19 virus can be transmitted in ALL AREAS, including areas with hot and humid weather
	Can exposure to the sun or to temperatures higher than 25°C prevent or cure COVID-19?	Exposing yourself to the sun or to temperatures higher than 25°C DOES NOT prevent nor cure COVID-19
	Does drinking black tea prevent spread of coronavirus?	There is currently no evidence to prove that black tea or other liquids can prevent coronavirus.
	Does putting pepper in soup prevent spread of coronavirus?	Adding pepper to your meals does not prevent or cure COVID-19
	Does spraying bleach or disinfectant on body prevent spread of coronavirus?	No spraying or introducing bleach or another disinfectant into your body WILL NOT protect you against COVID-19 and can be dangerous
	Can drinking alcohol prevent or cure COVID-19?	No drinking methanol or ethanol DOES NOT prevent or cure COVID-19 and can be extremely dangerous
	Are there currently any medicines to treat COVID-19?	There are currently no drugs licensed for the treatment or prevention of COVID-19
	Should I continue with ART and go to hospital or clinic to collect the same?	Yes you must continue ART and if you do not have the required dose, you should go to collect the same while observing precautions such as wearing a mask and maintaining 1 meter distance between you and others. Avoid unnecessary visits to the hospitals and clinics.
	Are there any specific foods which I should eat to prevent contracting COVID-19?	No there is no evidence that a particular food can prevent the disease but to maintain your health and well-being you should eat a well-balanced diet and exercise at home regularly.

