

Health Risk Alert – NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) CASE

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE: SUSPECTED NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) CASE

BACKGROUND

As per the World Health Organization (WHO) daily situation reports regarding COVID-19, there has been an increase in the number of cases reported and the number of fatalities related to the disease.

COVID-19 presents with common flu virus symptoms and is an infection in your nose, sinuses, upper throat and/or lungs. Symptoms include respiratory symptoms, fever, cough, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties

The following procedure will be followed by the CTICC In-House Medics in the event of any patient presenting with symptoms associated with COVID-19, and will be referred to onsite ER24 medical personal, contracted and deployed within the CTICC on a daily basis.

The ER24 crew attending to the patient will wear a N95/FFP2 face mask, safety spectacles and examination gloves during any contact within 2m of a patient.

The patient will also be asked to don a surgical face mask or N95/FFP2 mask (without exhalation valves) unless oxygen needs to be provided.

The patient will be moved to a private area, preferably the venue clinic.

The ER24 medical personal will request from the patient;

- The patients travel history for the 14 days prior to symptom onset
- Establish whether the patient has been in close contact with a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19, OR
- Travelled to an area where there is presumed ongoing community transmission of COVID-19 (currently China), OR
- Worked in or attended a health care facility where patients with COVID-19 infections were being treated.

If any of the above are positive, the patient will be managed as a possible COVID-19 case.

Should none of the points above be positive, the patient will be considered to not be a suspected case of COVID-19 and will be treated for the most likely other cause of their symptoms as per existing EMS guidelines.

For a suspected case of COVID-19, the crew will notify the designated contact centre, being Tygerberg Hospital, and escalate the case to the relevant person on call for COVID-19 incidents. The appropriate receiving facility being Tygerberg Hospital will be put on alert and be notified of a patient being transported via ambulance to the facility.

Cape Town International Convention Centre

Convention Square, 1 Lower Long Street,
Cape Town 8001, South Africa
Tel: +27 21 410 5000 Fax: +27 21 410 5001
Email: info@cticc.co.za
www.cticc.co.za

DIRECTORS: DA Cloete (Chairperson), A Cilliers, S Myburgh-de Gois, JC Fraser,
N Pangarker, SW Fourie, CK Zama, B Mdebuka, TT Motlhabane (CEO), W De Wet CA(SA).
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References:

2019-nCoV Quick Reference for Health Workers, Centre for Respiratory Diseases and Meningitis National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD).

Suspected or confirmed novel influenza: Management of a patient, MCSA.C.IPC.1.1, Med clinic SA.

Suspected cases should be discussed with NICD of the National Health Laboratory Service (NHLS), in line with Standard Operating Procedures by National Department of Health Directorate: Communicable Disease: 30 January 2020. The NICD Hot Line number is 066 562 4021 or 079 495 6739. Local Port Health Office must be informed of any suspected cases.