

Newsletter 24 March

Lockdown announcement

Our president, Cyril Ramaphosa, addressed the country [yesterday](#) evening stating that from [Thursday](#) midnight South Africa will be in a state of "lockdown". This is to try to "flatten the curve" and reduce the number of infections with COVID 19, with the hope that it will die out if there are no new hosts.

The West End Medical Suite will remain open during this time and I will be available for consultations in person, telephonic consultations as well as script renewals. Over the past 10 days our phone lines have been down, but thankfully they are now up and running again. Apologies for any inconvenience and confusion.

The prospect of 21 days at home may be daunting for most of us, however, I believe this should be seen as a time to stow away your electronic devices and start reconnecting with loved ones and immediate family members. Exercise is imperative for good mental health, so please try to do some exercise during this time, for example skipping or set up your own home mini-circuit or simply do family aerobics. Try to focus on your own physical and mental health during this time.

The coronavirus may spread in spite of these physical restrictions imposed by "lockdown" – so I have included some advice on what to do if you think you may have the coronavirus or if, in fact, you do have it.

- telephone your doctor or the 24 hour general public coronavirus hotline: [0800 029 999](tel:0800029999).
- the Western Cape has activated an additional hotline: [021 928 4102](tel:0219284102)
- email address dismed@westerncape.gov.za
- stay informed on #COVID19
- WhatsApp support for South Africans by saying "Hi" to [0600 123 456](tel:0600123456)
- sacoronavirus.co.za.

What should I do whilst waiting for my COVID test result? Consider yourself potentially infectious until the final results are available. You need to self-isolate at home and reduce possible transmission to others.

- you must stay in a specific room and use your own bathroom (if possible)
- where contact is unavoidable, you must wear a face mask and keep a distance of 2 m
- you must clean your hands with soap and water or use sanitisers containing 70% alcohol
- you must use a tissue if you cough or sneeze, discard it, and wash your hands
- you must not have any visitors to your home. This includes your domestic worker who does not live in your home.
- you should avoid sharing household items like dishes, cups, eating utensils and towels. After using any of these the item must be thoroughly washed with soap and hot water
- all high touch surfaces like table tops, counters, toilets, phones, computers etc should be frequently cleaned (by yourself)
- your laundry should be washed at the highest possible temperature. This should be above 60 degrees C. If possible tumble dry and iron use the highest setting compatible with the fabric. Disposable gloves and a plastic apron should be used when handling soiled material and all possible surfaces around the washing machine should be cleaned. Laundry must NOT be taken to a laundrette.

Monitor your symptoms and seek medical attention if your condition is deteriorating. Keep your doctor's number on hand, and the ambulance numbers in case of an emergency, 082 911 or 084 124

What do I do if my test is negative? You must complete your self-quarantine period by staying at home for the full 10 days, after which you can return to society.

What do I do if my test is positive? You need to remain in self-isolation as you did whilst waiting for your result. If you are asymptomatic or if your symptoms are mild you can de-isolate 10 days after the initial positive test. You may still be contagious even though you may feel well.

Severe symptoms may require hospitalization, and on discharge from hospital you may also need to self-isolate at home for a further 10 days.

A reminder of what you can do to reduce your risk:

- wash your hands often
- avoid shaking hands / crowds / meetings / gatherings / gyms / theatres / malls
- cover your mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing or wear a mask
- avoid close contact with anyone showing symptoms of respiratory illness such as coughing and sneezing.
- practice social distancing - this is the practice of reducing close contact between people to slow the spread of infections. Always maintain a distance of at least 1 to 2 meters from anyone else, and avoid visitors to your home.

In closing, I would like to mention that in spite of not being particularly adept at social media, I have opened a FaceBook page. All future updates regarding my practice will be posted here (see below). All medical queries and booking requests must be made directly through the practice as before, as FB is merely a place for you to check for any updated information.

Stay home & keep safe

Yours in health

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Dr Louise Wigen

