

1350

Number of confirmed
Batswana cases

764

Active cases
(Batswana)

575

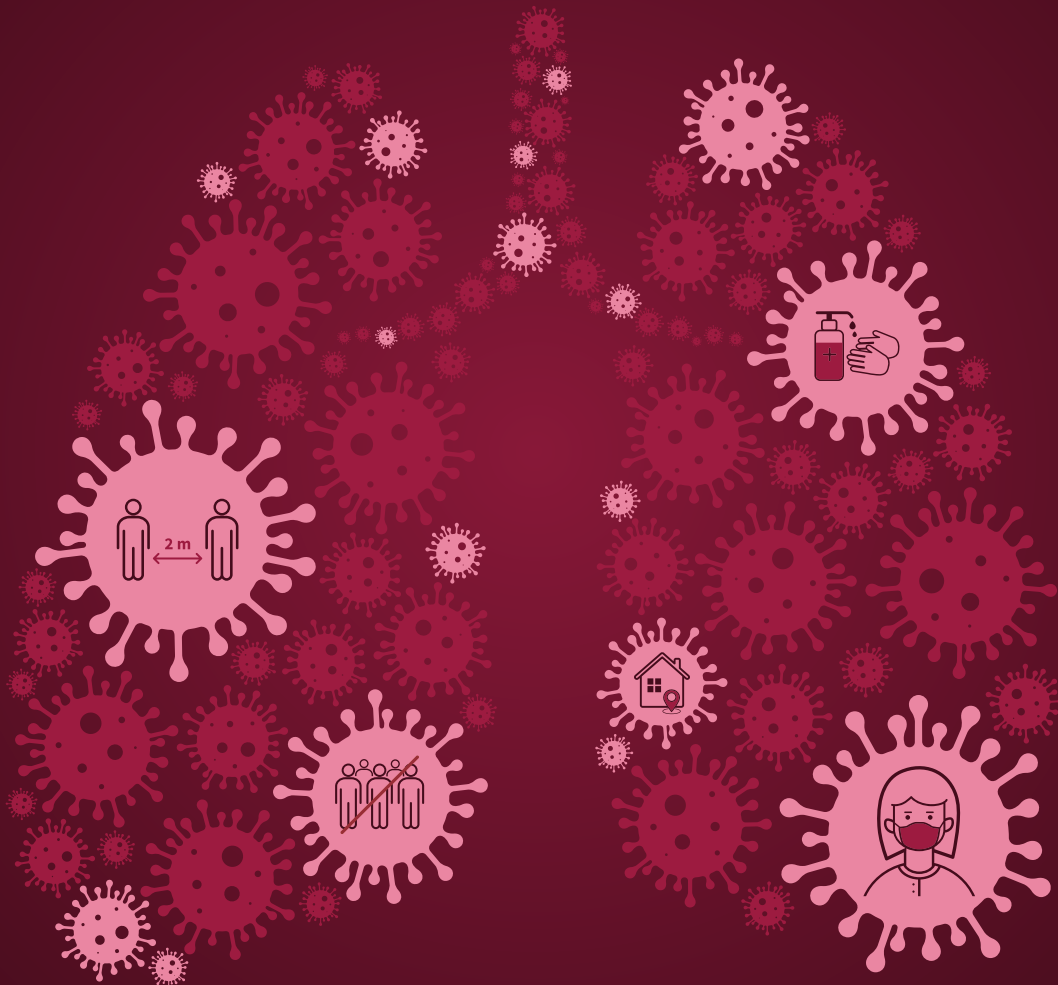
Number of recoveries
(Batswana)

11

Deceased

Above figures are as of 12 September.

COVID-19 pandemic isn't over yet





Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus
Director-General
 World Health Organization

COVID-19 pandemic isn't over

Nearly ten months after the new coronavirus first emerged, the COVID-19 pandemic is “not even close to being over”, the head of the World Health Organization (WHO) Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus has warned. Dr. Ghebreyesus called for renewed global commitment to save lives as cases surpass 10 million worldwide, with 500,000 deaths, and as the virus continues to spread.

Botswana has witnessed a rise in local transmission cases since July 2020. The number of deaths has risen to 11.

“We all want this to be over. We all want to get on with our lives. But the hard reality is: this is not even close to being over”, Dr. Ghebreyesus said. He added “although many countries have made some progress, globally the pandemic is actually speeding up. We’re all in this together, and we’re all in this for the long haul.”

The new normal

“The critical question that all countries will face in the coming months is how to live with this virus”, he said. “That is the new normal.”

COVID-19 cases are now on the rise in many parts of the country, though deaths have thankfully been slower to increase. As a response, the government has mandated masks while reopening certain spheres of public life. Having no real COVID-19 end in sight is frustrating and frightening for everyone, especially after so many of us brought our normal lives to a halt so we could try to get a handle on this crisis.

Five ways to save lives

Dr. Ghebreyesus underlined five priorities countries must focus on now to save lives.

They include empowering people to protect themselves through physical distancing and other public health measures, but also through sharing reliable information about COVID-19. Governments must continue to work to suppress virus transmission, ensuring tracing and quarantining of contacts. They must also prioritize early identification and clinical care, paying particular attention to high-risk groups such as the elderly and those living in long-term care facilities.

As there is still much to learn about the new coronavirus, Dr. Ghebreyesus emphasized the need for accelerated research.



What we need to do to get the situation back under control

Botswana has lifted the lockdown that was imposed on the capital Gaborone despite a rise in COVID-19 cases. The number of cases has been increasing since August 1 despite the lockdown. "Of special importance is for all of us to note that we are registering a lot of high numbers, [more] than our country can cope with. Moreover, there is a clear indication of local transmission," said the then Minister of Health and Wellness, Dr. Lemogang Kwape.

Kwape acknowledged there were economic considerations in lifting the lockdown. "To come out of this lockdown while cases continue to escalate is a precarious situation," Kwape said. "This development has the potential to be dangerous if we do not have the appropriate controls and measures in place. At the same time the government recognizes our lives must continue and we have to live with the disease. But that said we must continue to put our health ahead of other considerations."

This means that no matter how weary we are of the public health safety measures that make up our "new normal," we have to stick with them for the sake of our own health, that of our loved ones, and that of our communities at large.

Put it this way: You might be tired of living this way, but the virus doesn't care.

There are also very reasonable concerns about the impacts COVID-19 public health measures can have on other aspects of life. Shutdowns have the potential to harm the economy. It's not surprising that, more than anything else, many people just want a return to normal. But it's still our collective behavior that determines the trajectory of this epidemic.

As the adage goes, the only way out is through. We have to continue to behave as if we're in the midst of the pandemic, because we are. Ignoring it doesn't make it go away.

Regularly and thoroughly clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or wash them with soap and water. Why? Washing your hands with soap and water or using alcohol-based hand rub kills viruses that may be on your hands.

Maintain at least 1 metre distance between yourself and others. Why? When someone coughs, sneezes, or speaks they spray small liquid droplets from their nose or mouth which may contain virus. If you are too close, you can breathe in the droplets, including the COVID-19 virus if the person has the disease.

Avoid going to crowded places. Why? Where people come together in crowds, you are more likely to come into close contact with someone that has COVID-19 and it is more difficult to maintain physical distance of 1 metre.

Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth. Why? Hands touch many surfaces and can pick up viruses. Once contaminated, hands can transfer the virus to your eyes, nose or mouth. From there, the virus can enter your body and infect you.

Make sure you, and the people around you, follow good respiratory hygiene. This means covering your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze. Then dispose of the used tissue

immediately and wash your hands. Why? Droplets spread virus. By following good respiratory hygiene, you protect the people around you from viruses such as cold, flu and COVID-19.

Stay home and self-isolate even with minor symptoms such as cough, headache, mild fever, until you recover. Have someone bring your supplies. If you need to leave your house, wear a mask to avoid infecting others. Why? Avoiding contact with others will protect them from possible COVID-19 and other viruses.

If you have a fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical attention, but call by telephone in advance if possible and follow the directions of your local health authority. Why? National and local authorities will have the most up to date information on the situation in your area. Calling in advance will allow your health care provider to quickly direct you to the right health facility. This will also protect you and help prevent spread of viruses and other infections.

Keep up to date on the latest information from trusted sources, such as WHO or your local and national health authorities. Why? Local and national authorities are best placed to advise on what people in your area should be doing to protect themselves.

Read more:
<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advise-for-public>



Using a fabric mask:

- Clean your hands before putting on the mask.
- Inspect the mask for tears or holes, do not use a mask that is damaged.
- Adjust the mask to cover your mouth, nose, and chin, leaving no gaps on the sides.
- Avoid touching the mask while wearing it.
- Change your mask if it gets dirty or wet.
- Clean your hands before taking off the mask.
- Take off the mask by removing it from the ear loops, without

touching the front of the mask.

- Clean your hands after removing the mask.

Caring for a fabric mask:

- If your fabric mask is not dirty or wet and you plan to reuse it, put it in a clean plastic, resealable bag. If you need to use it again, hold the mask at the elastic loops when removing it from the bag.
- Wash fabric masks in soap or detergent and preferably hot water (at least 60 degrees) at least once a day.

- If hot water is not available, wash the mask in soap/detergent and room-temperature water, followed by either boiling the mask for 1 minute OR; by soaking the mask in 0.1% chlorine for 1 minute and thoroughly rinsing the mask with room temperature water (there should not be any toxic residue of chlorine on the mask).
- Make sure you have your own mask and do not share it with others.



To watch a video on tips for wearing a fabric mask safely to prevent COVID-19, click the blue screen on the laptop.

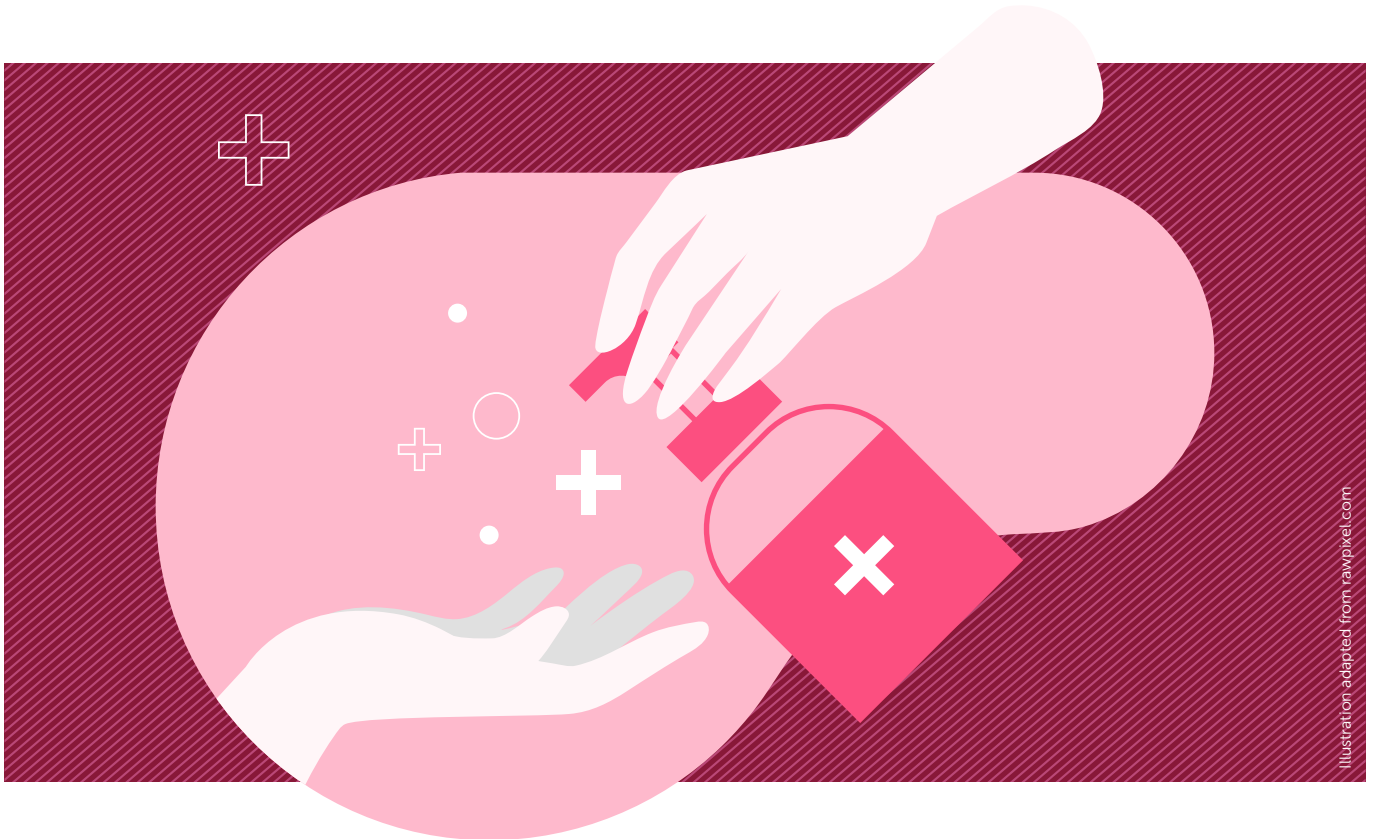


Illustration adapted from rawpixel.com

Safe use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers

To protect yourself and others against COVID-19, clean your hands frequently and thoroughly. Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer or wash your hands with soap and water. If you use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, make sure you use and store it carefully.

- Keep alcohol-based hand sanitizers out of children's reach. Teach them how to apply the sanitizer and monitor its use.
- Apply a coin-sized amount on your hands. There is no need to use a large amount of the product.
- Avoid touching your eyes, mouth and nose immediately after using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, as it can cause irritation.
- Hand sanitizers recommended to protect against COVID-19 are alcohol-based and therefore can

be flammable. Do not use before handling fire or cooking.

- Under no circumstance, drink or let children swallow an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. It can be poisonous.
- Remember that washing your hands with soap and water is also effective against COVID-19.

There's a lot that we can't control about this virus. But we can control how diligent we are about following these recommendations. The more we adhere to guidelines, the sooner we can move past this crisis.

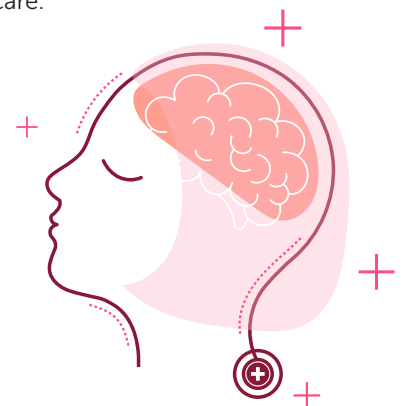
#HealthyAtHome - Mental health

Looking after our mental health

As the country continues to introduce measures to restrict movement as part of efforts to reduce the number of people infected with COVID-19, more and more of us are making huge changes to our daily routines.

The new realities of working from home, temporary unemployment, home-schooling of children, and lack of physical contact with other family members, friends and colleagues take time to get used to. Adapting to lifestyle changes such as these, and managing the fear of contracting the virus and worry about people close to us who are particularly vulnerable, are challenging for all of us. They can be particularly difficult for people with mental health conditions.

Fortunately, there are lots of things that we can do to look after our own mental health and to help others who may need some extra support and care.



Here are tips and advice that we hope you will find useful.

- **Keep informed.** Listen to advice and recommendations from your national and local authorities. Follow trusted news channels, such as local and national TV and radio, and keep up-to-date with the latest news from @WHO on social media.
- **Have a routine.** Keep up with daily routines as far as possible, or make new ones.
 - Get up and go to bed at similar times every day.
 - Keep up with personal hygiene.
 - Eat healthy meals at regular times.
 - Exercise regularly.
 - Allocate time for working and time for resting.
 - Make time for doing things you enjoy.
- **Minimize newsfeeds.** Try to reduce how much you watch, read or listen to news that makes you feel anxious or distressed. Seek the latest information at specific times of the day, once or twice a day if needed.
- **Social contact is important.** If your movements are restricted, keep in regular contact with people close to you by telephone and online channels.
- **Alcohol and drug use.** Limit the amount of alcohol you drink or

don't drink alcohol at all. Don't start drinking alcohol if you have not drunk alcohol before. Avoid using alcohol and drugs as a way of dealing with fear, anxiety, boredom and social isolation.

There is no evidence of any protective effect of drinking alcohol for viral or other infections. In fact, the opposite is true as the harmful use of alcohol is associated with increased risk of infections and worse treatment outcomes.

And be aware that alcohol and drug use may prevent you from taking sufficient precautions to protect yourself against infection, such as compliance with hand hygiene.

- **Screen time.** Be aware of how much time you spend in front of a screen every day. Make sure that you take regular breaks from on-screen activities.
- **Video games.** While video games can be a way to relax, it can be tempting to spend much more time on them than usual when at home for long periods. Be sure to keep the right balance with off-line activities in your daily routine.
- **Social media.** Use your social media accounts to promote positive and hopeful stories. Correct misinformation wherever you see it.

- **Help others.** If you are able to, offer support to people in your community who may need it, such as helping them with food shopping.
- **Support health workers.** Take opportunities online or through your community to thank your country's health-care workers and all those working to respond to COVID-19.

Don't discriminate

Fear is a normal reaction in situations of uncertainty. But sometimes fear is expressed in ways which are hurtful to other people. Remember:

- Be kind. Don't discriminate against people because of your fears of the spread of COVID-19.
- Don't discriminate against people who you think may have coronavirus.
- Don't discriminate against health workers. Health workers deserve our respect and gratitude.
- COVID-19 has affected people from many countries. Don't attribute it to any specific group.

If you have fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical care early. If you develop 'cold/flu' symptoms, do the following: Call 3632273, 3632756 or 3632757 (07:30hrs – 22:00hrs) 997 after 22:00hrs - **STAY HOME. CONSULT WITH A DOCTOR OVER THE PHONE BEFORE GOING IN PERSON FOR CARE.**

Main Links:

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>

<https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/covid-19-and-masks-tips-families>

<https://www.un.org/en/coronavirus>

<https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/covid-19>