

# Coronavirus 101 – what you need to know

While panic regarding the new coronavirus continues to spread, it's important to have the most basic information at hand.

## 1 What are the first symptoms?

*These are the most common symptoms listed by the World Health Organisation (WHO) most likely to be experienced first:*

- Fever
- Fatigue
- Dry cough

**Other symptoms may include:**

- Muscle aches
- Nasal congestion
- Sore throat
- Diarrhoea (not as common but reported in 3.7% of cases)

## 2 If it starts off mild, why do people die?

While about 80% of people suffer mild cases, older people (over 60) and those with underlying conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, cancer, heart conditions or pre-existing lung conditions are more likely to become severely ill and die from respiratory failure.

## 3 Will I get it?

The WHO reports that your risk depends on where you live or where you have travelled to recently, as the risk is higher in areas where numbers of people have already been diagnosed with the coronavirus. So, if you are currently in South Africa and haven't travelled to affected areas, your risk remains low.

## 4 How do I prevent it?

And what if indeed you are traveling to or living in an affected area? The best way to prevent it is to practice proper hygiene. That means going back to basics and regularly washing your hands thoroughly with soap, or an alcohol sanitiser. Cough or sneeze into the crook of your elbow. Also refrain from touching your face and eyes with unwashed hands. If you are currently wondering about the effectiveness of masks, the WHO states that only those who are already coughing and sneezing, or taking care of others who are coughing and sneezing, should wear a mask.

## 5 What if I get it?

If you have travelled to an affected area recently or have been in close contact with someone who has travelled to an affected area, go and see a doctor immediately if you experience any symptoms, however mild.

