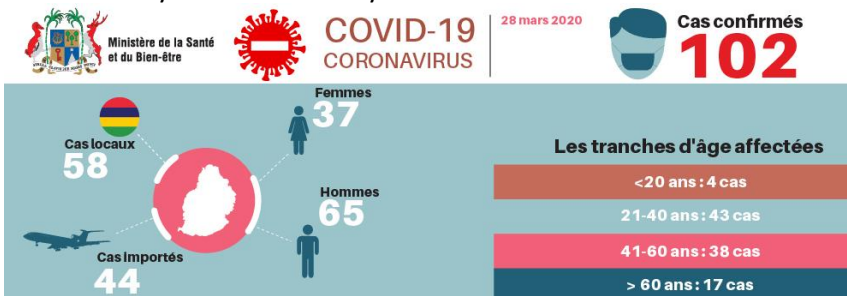


Why SOCIAL DISTANCING....

Public health officials from governments around the world are advising everyone, especially those most vulnerable to infection, to self-isolate or practice social distancing during the coronavirus pandemic. Social distancing limits the number of people an infected person comes into contact with – and potentially spreads the virus to – before they even realize they have it.



What is social distancing?

Social distancing is a tool public health officials recommend to slow the spread of any disease that is being passed from person to person. Simply put, it means that people stay far enough away from each other so that the coronavirus – or any pathogen – cannot spread from one person to another.

Social means not touching other people, and that includes handshakes. Physical touch is the most likely way a person will catch the coronavirus and the easiest way to spread it. Remember, keep that 6-foot distance and don't touch.

How does social distancing stop the virus?

Social distancing can never prevent 100% of transmissions, but by following these simple rules, individuals can play a critical role in slowing the spread of the coronavirus. If the number of cases isn't kept below what the health care system can handle at any one time – called flattening the curve – hospitals could become overwhelmed, leading to unnecessary deaths and suffering.

The main route of transmission for COVID-19

Like the flu, COVID-19 is spread primarily via respiratory droplets—little blobs of liquid released as someone coughs, sneezes, or talks. Viruses contained in these droplets can infect other people via the eyes, nose, or mouth—either when they land directly on somebody's face or when they're transferred there by people touching their face with contaminated hands.

Because respiratory droplets are too heavy to remain suspended in the air, direct person-to-person transmission normally only happens when people are in close contact—within about six feet of each other, according to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). It could also occur in a medical setting, if someone has to handle respiratory secretions such as saliva or mucus from an infected person.



For all those April babies amongst us, we wish you a birthday.

LOCKDOWN

STAY HOME AND STAY SAFE

Obviously, all our meetings and activities are cancelled for the foreseeable future. On 19 March 2020 Mauritians were asked by their government to go into lockdown for two weeks as from 0600 hrs on 20th. At that time the number of Covid-19 cases was only seven. However, many people did not stay home and consequently the government was forced to take stricter measures. On 23 March they announced an enforced lockdown confining all people to their home except those who are part of the essential services like the Police Force, medical services, and fire and rescue services. As I write this at the end of March, there are over 100 confirmed cases of Covid-19 on our island with 3 deaths. Police are enforcing the lockdown on the streets and all shops and even pharmacies are closed.

It is unlikely that life will return to normal on 2 April but the government are looking for ways to make sure the population has access to food and medical care. We expect them to announce these measures any time.

BUT STAY CONNECTED

We may not be able to meet but that is no reason to stay isolated. Our Corona WhatsApp group has been buzzing as people share information, advice, recipes and humour. If you are not already a member contact our committee to be added to the group.

Basic protective measures against the new coronavirus

Most people who become infected experience mild illness and recover, but it can be more severe for others. Take care of your health and protect others by doing the following:

Wash your hands frequently

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 social distancing

Maintain at least 1 metre (3 feet) distance between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing. **Why?** When someone coughs or sneezes 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 coughing has the disease.

Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth

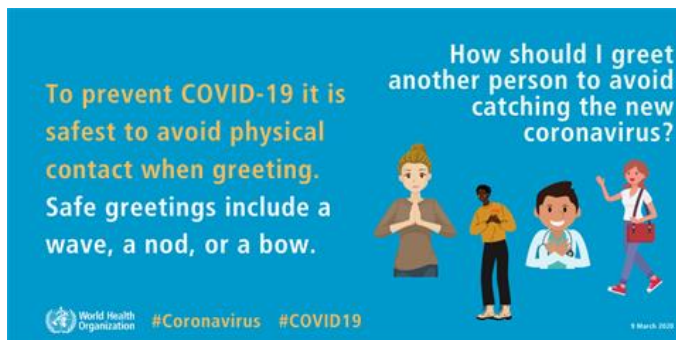
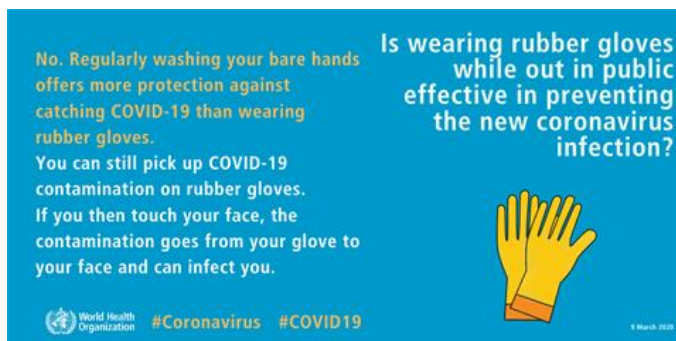
Why? Hands touch many surfaces and can pick up viruses. Once contaminated, hands can transfer the virus to your eyes, nose or mouth. From there, the virus can enter your body and can make you sick.

Practice respiratory hygiene

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

If you have fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical care early

Stay home if you feel unwell. If you have a fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical attention and call in advance. 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.



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