

Situations like the coronavirus pandemic can quickly become a catalyst for social conflict due to misinformation, rumours, and fake news, as observed in Pakistan during recent national catastrophes caused by dengue fever, floods, and earthquakes. The situation is no different with COVID-19 as stories emerge on how fake news is being used to manipulate response efforts, spread rumours and misinformation leading to behaviours that are undermining community cohesion, and causing citizens to be unaware of the role they can play in the pandemic response.

With that in mind, Accountability Lab Pakistan (ALP) with financial support from the European Union and technical support from The Asia Foundation (TAF) Pakistan, has officially launched the Coronavirus CivActs Campaign (CCC). This campaign aims to debunk rumours, conduct regular fact-checking, synthesize data, and convene virtual forums to produce informative bulletins each week. These bulletins will include important government decisions, visual materials, community feedback, debunked rumours with verified information, valid concerns, and other questions from the ground around health and other issues. The goal is to support enhanced awareness among the most vulnerable groups in Pakistan with a focus particularly on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh. These bulletins will be translated into Urdu and Sindhi and published on a weekly basis, with audio transcriptions in Pashto. They will be shared with stakeholders, local government leaders, media, CSOs, humanitarian organizations and others. They will also have a dedicated web-page, be shared widely on social media, and be aired on local community radio stations.

Current Situation of COVID-19 in Pakistan

Total Confirmed Cases
349,992

Total Active Cases
22,088

Total Deaths
7,055

Total Recoveries
320,849

Provinces	Confirmed Cases	Active Cases	Deaths	Recoveries
AJK	5041	1166	116	3759
Balochistan	16226	292	154	15780
GB	4409	154	93	4162
Islamabad	22765	2913	248	19604
KPK	41258	1530	1302	38426
Punjab	108221	8111	2438	97672
Sindh	152072	7922	2704	141446

Source: <http://covid.gov.pk/stats/pakistan>



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Fact

Myth



Common myths around Covid-19 that have been circulating at both the national and international level have come into focus in the past few months of the pandemic.



Pneumonia vaccines can protect you from the novel coronavirus

MYTH

The coronavirus is a new virus that will require its own vaccine to fight it uniquely. The pneumonia shot (pneumococcal vaccine) can only protect you from a type of bacterial pneumonia. However, since pneumonia and Covid-19 are both respiratory illnesses, if you do get sick from pneumonia, you could be vulnerable to Covid-19 as well. WHO recommends that you get vaccinated against respiratory illnesses such as pneumonia, but know that this does not guarantee protection from the coronavirus.

FACT

Vitamin and mineral supplements cannot cure COVID-19



While it is true that vitamins D, C, and Zinc are essential for a well-functioning immune system and play an important role in ensuring good health, there is currently no evidence on the use of these supplements as a treatment of Covid-19. While these supplements cannot cure Covid-19 (only a vaccine can do that), they can in fact improve your nutrition and immunity in order to prepare itself to fight off the coronavirus. However, please ensure that you take the daily prescribed doses from a recommended health practitioner, as an excess of these vitamins could end up leading to other health issues.



Rinsing your nose with saline prevents COVID-19

MYTH

There is no evidence that regularly rinsing the nose with saline can protect you from getting infected with the new coronavirus. While regularly rinsing your nose with saline can help you recover more quickly from the common cold, it cannot prevent respiratory infections such as Covid-19.

Source: WHO, Scientific American, NPR.



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This publication was produced with the financial support from the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of Accountability Lab Pakistan and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union

How can ventilation keep your homes, schools, offices, and shops safe from Covid-19?

Ventilation is the intentional introduction of fresh air into a space while the stale air is removed, to maintain the air quality of the space. WHO has stressed that ventilation is a crucial factor in preventing the spread of coronavirus indoors. Opening windows or doors to ensure that outdoor air circulates indoors is an effective way to prevent infection in public places such as offices, shops, buildings, tourist accommodations, and schools, etc. By introducing fresh air into closed spaces, we can ensure that the air inside is constantly changing, and that we are not breathing in the repeatedly circulated air shared by people around us.

In case of air recirculation, filters should be cleaned regularly, especially for jobs that place an individual at a medium or high risk of exposure to COVID-19. Examples of such jobs may include frontline workers in retail, tourist accommodation and domestic workers. If you live in a place with high levels of pollution, and cannot risk opening the windows, you can use air purifiers to clean the air.

It is essential that we increase the rate of ventilation in indoor spaces, by natural or mechanical ways, to avoid recirculation of air. Along with other preventive measures, this is an important measure we can implement to help prevent the spread of Covid-19.

The transgender community at high risk during the pandemic in Pakistan.

Transgender people in Pakistan mostly work in the informal sector of the economy, with most either begging on the streets or performing sex work to survive. Discrimination against transgender people in Pakistan has resulted in a lack of education and employment opportunities, limiting their options in society. The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic made their lives even more difficult with social distancing measures, and the stigma that transgender people are "unclean," depriving them of the limited means of making a living they had before the start of the pandemic (such as performing at weddings, sex work, etc).

According to a study conducted in Rawalpindi - Islamabad by UNDP in collaboration with Ministry of Human Rights, transgender people continued to experience discrimination from staff in social and health care settings, leaving them even more vulnerable in the wake of the pandemic (UNDP). The study revealed transgender people are at higher risk of being infected by the virus as many of them live together in cramped spaces, being unable to maintain social distancing. The study also revealed that 59% of respondents ranked public health care as their first priority as almost a quarter of them suffer from a disability or an illness, making them extremely vulnerable to contracting the novel coronavirus.



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New SOP guidelines issued for wedding ceremonies in Pakistan

A big public gathering such as a wedding ceremony is at high risk for the spread of Covid-19 infection, and should therefore be organized while complying with health and safety protocols. Accordingly, SOP guidelines have been issued by the Ministry of Health, to be implemented starting Nov 20th, in the urban centers of Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Multan, Hyderabad, Gilgit, Muzaffarabad, Mirpur, Peshawar, Quetta, Gujranwala, Gujrat, Faisalabad, Bahawalpur & Swat.

Indoor weddings have been banned by National Command Operation Center (NCOC) in the aforementioned cities, starting from Nov 20, 2020. If you plan to organize an outdoor wedding, you must ensure that:

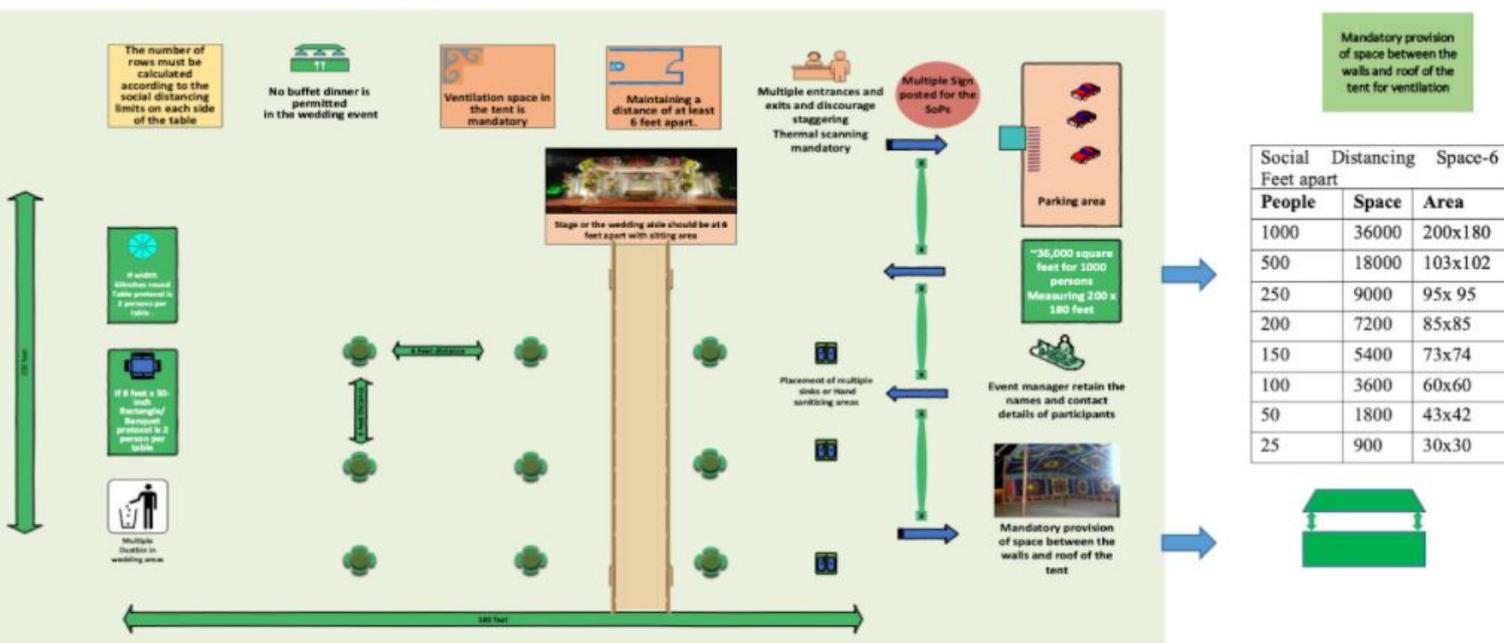
- **Your guests are no more than a 1000 - sitting 6 feet apart.**
- **That the event lasts a maximum of 2 hours (ending at 10 pm latest).**
- **That everyone wears a mask at the event.**

Space requirements should be made according to the number of people attending the event, by adhering to the following mandatory guidelines on person to space ratio, ensuring that all attendees sit 6 feet apart.



Government of Pakistan
Ministry of National Health Services,
Regulations & Coordination

Annex. Layout for outdoor wedding events



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The responsibility of ensuring everyone complies with the wedding SOPs lies with the organizers of the event and the event managers. During the event, the following guidelines (SOPs) must be adhered to:

- **Thermal scanning** for all attendees is mandatory at the entrance.
- All attendees **must wear a face mask/cloth face** covering at the event (to be monitored by marriage event authorities).
- **Buffet dinner or lunch cannot be served at the event.** Instead, organizers can provide lunch boxes or table services.
- Attendees should **frequently wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds** and use hand sanitizer that contains **at least 60% alcohol**.
- All attendees **must maintain social distancing of 6 feet** at all times.
- Employees and attendees should **stay at home if tested positive for COVID-19** or are suspected with symptoms of the virus.
- The hosts should provide basic hygiene supplies including soap, water, hand sanitizer, paper towels, tissues, disinfectant wipes, cloth face coverings (as feasible), and no-touch trash cans. They should also ensure that each guest is given a face mask and mini sanitizer at entrance for use.
- There should be post signs in highly visible locations (e.g., at entrances, in restrooms) that promote everyday protective measures.
- **Traditional Greetings** (hand shaking, hugging etc.) **should be discouraged**, as this can quickly spread infection.

Mild Symptoms include:



Sore Throat



Fatigue



Loss of smell



Headache



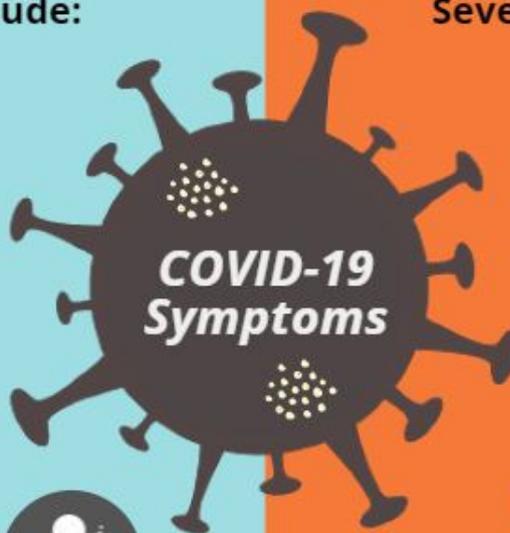
Vomiting



Fever



Coughing



Severe Symptoms include:



Chest Pain



Difficulty in Breathing



Inability to stay awake



Bluish Face or Lips

If you have COVID-19 symptoms contact your doctor or the coronavirus helpline at



1166



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Where can I get tested?

Karachi

Aga Khan University Hospital

Stadium Road, Karachi

Dow Medical Hospital

Ojha Campus

Suparco Road, Karachi

Indus Hospital

Opposite Darussalam Society, Korangi Crossing, Karachi

Multan

Nishtar Hospital

Nishtar Road,

Justice Hamid Colony, Multan

Rawalpindi

Armed Forces Institute of Pathology

Range Road

CMH Complex, Rawalpindi

Hyderabad

Liaquat University of Medical and Health Sciences (LUMHS)

Liberty Market Roundabout, Near

Liaquat University Hospital

Hyderabad, Sindh.

Islamabad

National Institute of Health

Park Road

Chak Shahzad, Islamabad

Khairpur

Gambat Institute of Medical Sciences

Gambat, Khairpur, Sindh

Abbottabad

Public Health Lab Ayub Teaching Hospital

Mansehra Road. Abbottabad, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Shaheena Jameel Hospital

Abbottabad . N-35

Quetta

Fatima Jinnah Hospital

Bahadurabad, Wahdat Colony, Quetta

Peshawar

Khyber Medical University

Phase 5, Hayatabad, Peshawar, KP

Hayatabad Medical Complex

Phase-4 Phase 4 Hayatabad,

Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Lahore

Punjab AIDS Lab

PACP Complex 6 - Birdwood Road, Lahore

Shaukat Khanum Memorial Hospital

7A Block R-3 M.A. Johar Town, Lahore

For more cities visit the [COVID-19 Health Advisory Platform](#)

Coronavirus CivActs Campaign is brought to you by
Accountability Lab Pakistan

To receive our
regular updates
through WhatsApp

1. Add our number **+27 60 080 6146** as a contact.
2. Send the word "**Pakistan**" as a message on WhatsApp.



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