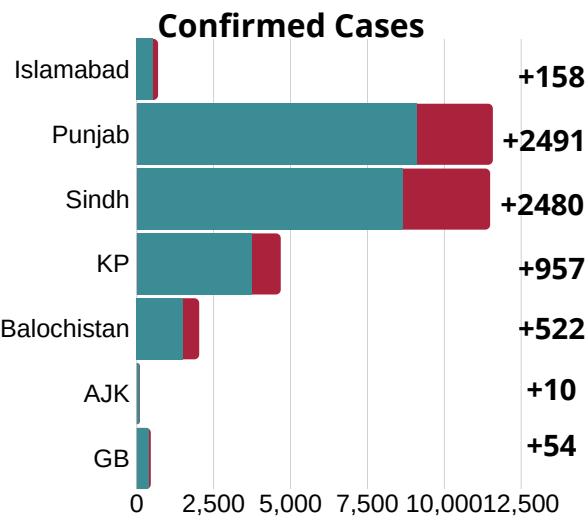
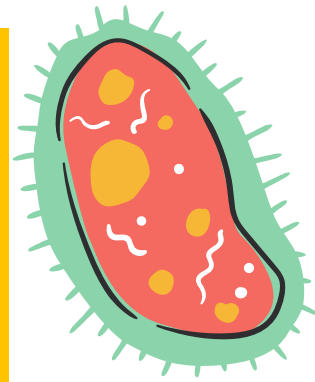


Situations like the coronavirus pandemic can quickly become a catalyst for social conflict due to misinformation, rumors and fake news, as we've seen in the past. Every day we continue to see more false information shared throughout communities, confusing citizens and leaving them unsure as to who can answer their questions.



The **Pakistan Coronavirus CivicActs Campaign (CCC)** captures rumors and perceptions among communities to eliminate information gaps between the government, media, humanitarian agencies and citizens. By providing the public with facts, these coronavirus bulletins aim to create a better understanding of needs regarding coronavirus and to debunk rumors before they can do more harm.



DON'T PANIC!

Follow these steps to help prevent the spread of coronavirus.

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use hand sanitizer (with at least 60% alcohol) if soap and water aren't available.
- Cover your nose and mouth (with your elbow or a tissue) when sneezing.
- Avoid crowded places and practice social distancing. If you think you have been exposed to someone with coronavirus, quarantine yourself for a minimum of 14 days and monitor any symptoms.
- Do not stockpile supplies.

How is COVID-19 affecting people with disabilities?

What problems are people with disabilities currently facing due to the pandemic?

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted many aspects of our daily lives, but its impacts are especially acute for people living with disabilities who may need health care services or community support while hospital loads increase, and social distancing measures are in place.

As we see an overload of information on news channels, not all information is accessible for persons with hearing loss or visual impairment. Amidst scarcity of medical resources, individuals with disabilities fear that if they contract COVID-19, they don't know how they'll be treated given that doctors have to make life or death decisions. Getting proper medication and maintaining routines have become a challenge. As economic challenges increase, there is a fear of stigma around disabilities increasing, resulting in abandonment. Due to social distancing, many people with disabilities face exclusion as they rely on others for mobility. The stress on primary caregivers in homes has increased due to limitations of social movement.

As a community we have to determine how we can help people with disabilities continue on as normal. This can mean volunteering to get their medications from markets, helping them maintain sanitation measures, providing them accessible means of information about COVID-19, and being vigilant and reporting cases of abuse against persons with disabilities.

What steps is the government taking to assist people with disabilities?

We have not seen any specific measures taken by the government to mitigate the challenges faced by people with disabilities during lockdown. Measures could include inclusive telehealth calls, targeted information dissemination towards people with disabilities, and volunteer programs that check up with registered people with disabilities. During public health crises, special provisions for people with disabilities should be taken but have not been taken yet. It is necessary to collect data on the pandemic's impact on people with disabilities, and include them at the policy making level for an inclusive strategy. However, the government's general programs do also cater to people with disabilities.

The programs include:

1. [Ehsaas Emergency Cash Programme](#)
2. [Ehsas Rashan Programme](#)
3. [Sehat Sahulat Programme](#)

Are there any helplines that people with disabilities can contact?

Individuals with special needs and family members of individuals with special needs can contact the following numbers with questions or concerns:

1. Ministry of Human Rights legal assistance helpline: **1099**
2. Government health helpline: **1166**
3. Ministry of human right Joint Secretary (Admin) **051-9201921 or kamranrajar@yahoo.com.uk**

How is COVID-19 affecting people with disabilities?

What are other countries doing to assist their citizens with disabilities?

When the COVID-19 outbreak occurred in China, local organizations and networks worked to produce informative videos in sign language with accessible scripts for people with hearing impairment. This led the Beijing municipal government to hire a sign language interpreter for press conferences held for the public to make information accessible to the people with hearing impairments.

In Canada, the government is working to ensure the introduction of benefits to address special needs for people with disabilities. One such program is the [Canada Emergency Response Benefit \(CERB\)](#), which aims to provide \$2,000 a month in federal benefits paid for up to 16 weeks. The program intends to support people with disabilities who have had to stop their paid work because of the pandemic, but who are still receiving provincial income assistance. Another initiative is the [Canada Child Benefit \(CCB\)](#), a tax free monthly payment made to eligible families to help with the cost of raising children under 18 years of age with disabilities. In addition, the government of Canada is partnering with disability communities to take immediate, significant and decisive actions to support people with disabilities by announcing the establishment of the [COVID-19 Disability Advisory Group \(CDAG\)](#) which to advise the Minister, on the real-time lived experiences of people with disabilities during this crisis on disability-specific issues, challenges, systemic gaps, and strategies needed.

Meanwhile in the UK, the government has relaxed coronavirus SOPs for people with autism and learning disabilities who now can leave the house for exercise more than once a day and can travel outside of their local area under current lockdown measures. The amendment was made when a few lawyers highlighted the requests by families to relax the SOPs as they had children with disabilities whose conditions required going outside, in order to maintain their health they should be able to do so.

Finally, governments around the world are working towards providing vital and accurate information about the pandemic to people with disabilities ensuring their safety. The French government has taken steps to create [dedicated information for persons with disabilities](#) available on their main webpage of coronavirus updates by the state, as well as by governments in [Germany](#), [Italy](#), and [Romania](#).

What steps do human rights organizations suggest taking?

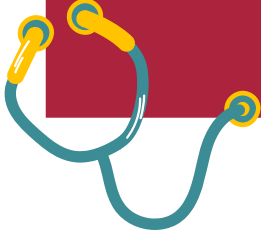
During this time of crisis, human rights organizations around the world are advising governments and responsible stakeholders to take measures and protective actions to protect the rights of people with disabilities and reduce the impact of COVID-19. Some of these include:

1. Discouraging discrimination in health services especially during the pandemic. Health workers and authorities should ensure that health care services are provided without any discrimination, environmental limitations, social status, communication costs, and limited insurance.
2. Government to provide accurate, accessible, and timely information about the disease, prevention methods, and services to ensure that people with disabilities are not deprived of lifesaving information. Communications should use plain language to maximize understanding.
3. The government should address economic hardships of people with disabilities living in poverty during the crisis so that they are not faced with more barriers in attaining their basic needs. Additional protective measures must be taken for people according to their different types of disabilities.
4. The government must consult people with disabilities whenever developing strategies or in the decision making process so that response plans are inclusive and accessible to people with disabilities, ensuring equality for all and leaving no one behind.

What do I do if I think I have coronavirus?

Do you have any symptoms?

- **Fever**
- **Shortness of breath**
- **Dry cough**
- **Tiredness**



If so, contact your doctor or the coronavirus helpline at 1166.



Where can I get tested?

Karachi

Aga Khan University Hospital

Stadium Road, Karachi

Civil Hospital

DOW University Campus
Mission Road, Karachi

Dow Medical Hospital

Ojha Campus
Suparco Road, Karachi

Indus Hospital

Opposite Darussalam Society, Korangi
Crossing, Karachi

Lahore

Punjab AIDS Lab

PACP Complex
6 - Birdwood Road, Lahore

Shaukat Khanum Memorial Hospital

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

Islamabad

National Institute of Health

Park Road
Chak Shahzad, Islamabad

Rawalpindi

Armed Forces Institute of Pathology

Range Road
CMH Complex, Rawalpindi

Multan

Nishtar Hospital

Nishtar Road,
Justice Hamid Colony, Multan

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

Coronavirus CivActs Campaign is brought to you by
Accountability Lab Pakistan.