

The coronavirus pandemic currently shocking the world gained entry into Nigeria with its first case confirmed on the 27th of February, 2020 in Lagos state. The discovery spiralled into a frenzy of misinformation as the NCDC and Federal Ministry of Health worked to allay citizens' fears and contain the outbreak. It is important that we all play a role in beating the virus by sharing only validated information and promoting effective preventive measures.

The Coronavirus CivActs Campaign (CCC) gathers rumours, concerns and questions from communities across Nigeria to eliminate information gaps between the government, media, NGOs and citizens. By providing the public with facts, the CCC ensures a better understanding of needs regarding the coronavirus and debunks rumours before they can do more harm. Information sharing will be critical to defeating the virus, due to the diverse cultural backgrounds and drawbacks in national education. About 47% of the Nigerian population have access to internet services in according to a 2018 estimate by Statista.

COVID-19 rate of spread in perspective

The rate of spread of COVID-19 is exponential, as seen in many countries around the world. This is because of how easy it is for the virus to spread from one person to the other. The novel coronavirus continually replicates in the lungs of an infected person and such a person can spread the disease not only by coughing and sneezing, but also by releasing droplets through talking and breathing.

The rate of spread of the virus can be demonstrated through the official figures released by the NCDC over the past 3 months. Since the first confirmed case of the illness was discovered on the 27th of February, the NCDC have released records of new cases on a daily basis. About a month following this discovery, and following calls to test returnees that showed symptoms, the Centre had confirmed 40 cases of the virus.

This small surge in cases resulted in the order of lockdown measures by government on the 30th of March to keep the spread under control. In the background, the NCDC worked to develop more testing laboratories to improve testing rates. Unfortunately, the lockdown efforts were marred by inadequate adherence, as a high number of citizens in the most affected states at the time, Lagos, FCT and Ogun, flaunted lockdown measures. Palliatives provided by government also lacked clarity around distribution and accountability, therefore informal workers were forced to flout the lockdown rules in search of sustenance. By the 23rd of April, the number of confirmed cases had risen to 981 nationwide.

Due to rising security concerns, economic complications and unrest, the government announced a gradual easing of lockdown measures on the 4th of May, even as cases were still on the rise. A rise in “unexplained deaths” had also begun in Kano state which prompted a total lockdown in the state. However, these measures still went largely unheeded as interstate travel increased and citizens went about their daily lives. By the 23rd of May, a month later, number of cases had shot up to 7526 with community spread confirmed.

This high rate of spread sets an unsettling precedent for the coming month of June, as high influx of cases ultimately means more pressure on health centres and isolation centres. Inability to keep the spread of the virus under control could affect those with severe illnesses even unrelated to the virus. To buttress this point, the highest hit state, Lagos has raised concerns over a lack of treatment space for COVID-19 patients and announced the commencement of home isolation for milder cases of the disease.

In the wake of these realisations, it is important for citizens to take responsibility by practicing social distancing and adopting proper use of facemasks. These measures have been useful in flattening the curve in other countries like the Czech Republic.



COVID-19 CASE UPDATE

4 New Cases Confirmed

11:00p.m. 23rd March, 2020

TOTAL CONFIRMED	40
ACTIVE CASES	37
TOTAL DISCHARGED	2
TOTAL DEATHS	1

NCDC Toll-free Number: 080097000010

Twitter/Facebook: @NCDCgov/ COVID19.NCDC.GOV.NG



COVID-19 CASE UPDATE

108 NEW CASES CONFIRMED

11:30p.m. 23rd April, 2020

TOTAL CONFIRMED	981
DISCHARGED	197
DEATHS	31

NCDC Toll-free Number: 080097000010

Twitter/Facebook: @NCDCgov/ COVID19.NCDC.GOV.NG



COVID-19 CASE UPDATE

265 NEW CASES CONFIRMED

23rd May, 2020

TOTAL CONFIRMED	7526
DISCHARGED	2174
DEATHS	221

NCDC Toll-free Number: 080097000010

Twitter/Facebook: @NCDCgov/ COVID19.NCDC.GOV.NG

RUMOURS



Facemasks with exhalation valves are better to use than surgical and cloth masks

Surgical masks should be worn inside out if you are not showing symptoms

Ease of Lockdown means that COVID-19 cases are reducing

COVID-19 is the same as malaria and can be cured with malaria drugs too

Frequent washing of hands can make you sick

VS



FACTS

Facemasks with exhalation valves are not suitable for use during the COVID-19 pandemic because when you exhale, the valve opens, releasing unfiltered air to the surroundings. Coughing and sneezing while wearing such masks will cause a spray of droplets and increase risk of transmission.

There is only one suitable way of wearing surgical face masks and that is with the coloured surface facing outward. Inverting the facemask does not give additional protection and is not an identification marker for asymptomatic status.

According to the Presidential Task Force on COVID-19, ease of lockdown was done based on economic and security considerations. Citizens are still expected to practice social distancing and wear of facemasks to reduce risk of transmission. High numbers of confirmed cases are still being recorded daily.

Malaria and Coronavirus are two different types of organisms even though both illnesses present with fever. COVID-19 is caused by a virus while Malaria is caused by a plasmodium parasite. However, a person can have both illnesses at the same time. No malaria drug has been verified as a cure for the coronavirus.

Everyday handwashing cannot remove the healthy bacteria on the skin except you start to damage them. However, compulsive handwashing is not advised because it can cause damage to the skin and affect the natural balance of the skin.

New Developments in the fight against COVID-19

Amidst fears of the pandemic, progress is being made in understanding the coronavirus and the extent and parameters of its spread. In an effort to address the shortage of test kits in the country, the NCDC is set to begin local production of COVID-19 test kits after a breakthrough in successfully validating the first phase of viral RNA extraction. If this new test kit being developed by the National Biotechnology Development Agency (NABDA) is verified, it could test 20,000 people a day. The DG NCDC has also announced plans to test 2 million people in the next 3 months.

A scientific study in Singapore has determined that COVID-19 patients can no longer transmit the virus after 11 days of getting sick, even though they may still test positive. This was based on a study of 73 patients. Though more studies need to be conducted to confirm this new information, it is a step in the right direction in determining when patients can be discharged from isolation, and potentially reduce pressure on treatment centres and stigmatization, as well as serve as a better advisory to health workers.

New information has surfaced about the possibility of being infected with COVID-19 more than once. Fears were reignited in South Korea when hundreds of patients tested positive for the virus a second time after being discharged. However, upon further inspection, it was found that they were not infectious. The Korea CDC after launching a study on 285 patients determined that they were carrying non-infectious residue viral particles and not live coronaviruses.

CORONAVIRUS UPDATE IN NIGERIA AT AS TODAY - 07/06/2020

13,873

CONFIRMED CASES

382

DEATHS

4,351

RECOVERED

85,375

TESTED

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

