



Ministry of Health Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update 21/03/2020

As of close of day yesterday, eight (8) people (total to date) are being investigated by the Ministry of Health for Coronavirus (COVID-19). Laboratory tests are being done to confirm or rule out seasonal flu and COVID-19.

These cases have a history of travel to or contact with a relative who had travelled to Australia, Fiji, New Zealand or Spain and then had flu-like symptoms upon return to Samoa. All cases are now in isolation and being monitored closely by the Ministry of Health.

This means that the patients are being cared for separately from other patients to ensure that there is no transmission of COVID-19 if it is eventually confirmed.

These patients were brought to care through the work of both public and private medical providers working to prevent Samoa from having an outbreak.

The patient's samples have been sent to a laboratory in New Zealand for COVID-19 testing. The public will be updated immediately as soon as we have further information. As of today, the results are still pending.

The Ministry is presently following up all persons who came into contact with these patients for medical examination to determine if they need to be isolated. They will also be interviewed to find out who they have also been in contact with recently. This process is called contact tracing and it helps the Ministry to manage and stop the spread of diseases.

We encourage all persons who have travelled or transited through countries affected by COVID-19 to monitor themselves for the development of fever, cough and shortness of breath. If you have any of these symptoms please contact the Ministry of Health COVID-19 call centre or a doctor for advice.

Additionally, please self-isolate at home. That is to stay in a separate room from family members and use separate eating and drinking utensils.

The Ministry of Health is taking full precautions and preventive measures, to control the transmission of COVID-19, including preparing the health system to treat and care for our patients. The public also needs to do its part to protect Samoa:

1. Wash your hands regularly with *soap and clean water or alcohol-based hand rub.*
2. *Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue and throw it into a bin and wash your hands after.*
3. *Wear a mask only if you are a sick patient in the hospital, or a healthcare professional working directly with a patient.*
4. *Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth*

5. *Call a healthcare provider if you feel sick for medical advice*
6. *Avoid unnecessary travel*
7. *Avoid mass gatherings and keep a distance of 1 meter from people with flu-like symptoms.*
8. *Clean frequently touched surfaces (i.e. door knobs, counters, phones).*
9. *Avoid UNECESSARY visits to hospital, limit family visits to hospital to 1 person, and keep children under age 19 away from hospital*

Please consult our website, facebook pages, and MOH call centre for accurate and updated facts, information and travel advisory.

FB: @samoagovt @publichealthsamoa

MOH Coronavirus Call Centre Moto'otua, contact the numbers below;

Toll Free # - 800 6440

#21183

#21176

#21173

#22914

#22241

#24402

Ministry of Health Website: www.health.gov.ws

End