



# FINFLASH

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE CORONAVIRUS

To read more about the financial impact of the Covid 19 virus, please go to the Info centre on our web site [www.finfofocus.co.za](http://www.finfofocus.co.za). This section will be continuously updated with new articles about the local and global financial impact of the virus.

The following is a summary of current information about the medical aspects of the Coronavirus (Covid 19).

It is better to have knowledge about the condition than to be ignorant about it. The World Health Organisation has an excellent web site where updates are continuously uploaded (WHO: International travel and health). One of the most important aspects in the effort to curtail the disease, has been the call for **research**:

"This outbreak is a test of solidarity -- political, financial and scientific. We need to come together to fight a common enemy that does not respect borders, ensure that we have the resources necessary to bring this outbreak to an end and bring our best science to the forefront to find shared answers to shared problems. **Research is an integral part of the outbreak response,**" WHO Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

Research will focus on trying to understand the virus: its origin, transmission and possible prevention and control as well as developing possible vaccines. Interestingly, research will also take into consideration input from the social sciences on the outbreak response.

**Heraclitus**, an Ancient Greek philosopher (c. 500 BCE) summed up very precisely what the world is experiencing at present: *everything is in flux*, or as it is sometimes also expressed, *uncertainty is the only certainty*. This saying puts the unexpected impact of the Coronavirus on the global community into perspective, but also underlines the fact that even this impact cannot continue without changing (again) sometime in the future.

Until a general vaccine is available, **prevention** has been the main objective, but in order to prevent the spread of the infection, it helps to have some basic knowledge of the Coronavirus Covid-19.

The **symptoms of Covid-19** are very similar to those experienced at the onset of a flu episode: fever, feeling tired, having a dry cough, sometimes also a runny nose, aches and pains, a sore throat and sometimes even diarrhoea. Typically, the virus settles in the throat where it causes inflammation and a feeling of dryness. This lasts for about 3 to 4 days, after which it settles in the lungs where it causes pneumonia, as well as a high fever and difficult breathing. If choking is experienced, medical attention is immediately required. Ironically, some infected persons do not feel unwell at all. Most people recover completely within about 10 days and do not have to be hospitalised.

The **people most at risk** are young babies whose immune systems have not yet developed fully. Older people (above 80) and people with medical problems (high blood pressure, heart disease or diabetes) are more likely to develop any serious illness, therefore also this infection. This virus attacks the respiratory system. People with any respiratory problems (persistent harsh, dry cough and/or difficulty breathing, sensation of choking) should see their doctor.

The **disease is spread** through small droplets from the nose or mouth of an infected person who coughs or exhales. It is spread through coming **into contact** with the droplets that landed on objects and surfaces around the person who coughed or exhaled, including in clothes and tissues, where it can survive between 6 to 12 hours or even longer on metal surfaces. Therefore, coughing and sneezing into your elbow (or a tissue) is essential and why handwashing and not touching your face are such important preventative measures. People can also catch the virus if they directly breathe in the droplets exhaled by an infected person. Therefore, it is important to stay more than 1-3 meters away from a sick person, avoid crowded environments where possible and practise social distancing in general. At present it is thought that the virus is only spread through contact and is NOT air-borne. Furthermore, there is no evidence that a person can be infected by his/her pet. There is no evidence either, that a package that travelled from overseas, and exposed to different conditions and temperatures, would spread the disease.

**Antibiotics do not work against viruses.** Use antibiotics only as prescribed by a doctor and for treating a bacterial (NOT a viral) infection. Other medicines may help alleviate the symptoms (for instance to reduce fever) but they cannot prevent or cure the infection. At present, **there is no vaccine available** and no antiviral medicine to prevent or treat the disease. Care to relieve symptoms is available. People who are seriously ill, should go to hospital.

The most effective ways to **protect yourself** and others are frequently clean your hands, cough into your bent elbow or a tissue, and maintain a distance of at least 3 meters (10 feet) from people who are coughing or sneezing. **Social distancing** remains the **most important preventative measure** to combat the **spread** of the disease.

The **incubation period** (the time it takes between being infected and presenting with the symptoms) of the virus is from 1 – 14 days, usually about 5 days. It seems as if the virus may survive on a surface from a few hours to several days, depending on environmental conditions (type of surface, temperature, humidity, etc.). If a surface is infected, clean it with a disinfectant. After cleaning the surface, remember to clean your hands with soap and water. Avoid touching your eyes, mouth, or nose.

**For information that is continuously updated, see the WHO website, especially the section on travel and health.**

At Finfoocus, we have contingency plans in place to make our interactions as safe as possible for our staff, our clients and our other stakeholders. Your safety and well-being remain our first concern. If it is possible for you to transact with us electronically, please do so. Much can be done on this basis. For those who are able, virtual appointments via the internet could very easily replace face to face contact during this critical period. Remember that social distancing is one of the best ways to combat this virus. Though neither you nor your adviser may fall in the risk categories outlined above, people dear to you (parents or someone with a compromised immune system) could well be affected. We all have an obligation to keep them safe.

For our clients who need to engage directly with us, please sanitize your hands at reception, immediately on arrival. As staff members of Finfoocus, we do the same and we also keep the surfaces around us sanitized. We do have other contingency plans as well. Staff only come into the office when necessary. All our electronic systems have all been moved to a cloud based infra-structure. We can continue working without the need for, or being present in, a physical office space. The technology to allow us to work and engage remotely already exists. We should now embrace this technology to further the global fight against a potentially very serious threat. We can only overcome this threat if everybody adheres to the protocols set out by our Government and the World Health Organization.

As financial advisers it is important to us that our clients should understand that markets respond to sentiment as well as to hard facts. The lowering of the oil price is a result of decisions taken based on fact (inter alia, world-wide impact on economic activity & inability of OPEC to agree on the way forward) and sentiment (amongst others fear about what might happen if oil supply outstrips demand). The impact of the virus on the oil-price is a fact, but how the markets respond to that impact, also determines the eventual outcome.

We may need to change the way we work for a while, but this should not impact on our ability to continue doing our best for our clients.

Please take care and be safe.

Schalk van Niekerk  
Managing Director

