

COVID -19 Mt Hagen General Hospital Preparedness and Response

About COVID-19

The COVID-19 novel coronavirus is a new strain of coronavirus affecting humans which is highly infectious. Already known types of diseases caused by corona viruses are common cold, SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) and MERS (Middle East Respiratory Syndrome) to name a few.

This novel coronavirus is still new and therefore we are still learning more about it.

Symptoms can vary depending on each case and everyone who gets COVID-19 will experience it differently.

People who have extreme symptoms or side effects from the virus may take weeks or months to recover fully, while people with a mild illness may feel completely better within a week or two. If you have any COVID-19 symptoms, no matter how mild, you should contact your local doctor or come visit the Mt Hagen General Hospital Covid-19 facility.

Signs and Symptoms of Corona Virus:

Fever
Cough
Sore throat
Shortness of breath
Runny nose
Fatigue
Loss of smell, taste and/or appetite.
Muscle or joint pain

Everybody is at risk of getting COVID-19. To protect yourself, your family and the community from getting COVID-19 you must maintain good hygiene and practice social distancing.

Do

- Stay home if you are sick
- If you have any COVID-19 symptoms, no matter how mild, get tested
- Stay 1.5 metres away from other people
- Wash your hands often, using soap and water or hand sanitiser
- Sneeze or cough into your arm or a tissue. Then put the tissue in the bin
- Wear a face mask
- Avoid public gatherings

Do not

- Go near people if you are coughing or sneezing
- Touch your mouth, nose and eyes
- Shake hands
- Hug or kiss people.

If you're feeling sick:

- Get tested
- Stay home and isolate until you get the results and your symptoms resolve.

Testing helps us find as many cases in the community as quickly as possible. This will ensure we are doing everything we can to manage Western Highland's response to the pandemic.

If you have any of the following COVID-19 symptoms, no matter how mild, get tested:



Fever



Cough



Sore throat



Shortness of breath



Runny nose



Fatigue



Diarrhoea



Vomiting or nausea



Loss of smell and/or taste

Other symptoms people may experience include muscle or joint pain, and loss of appetite.

Where to get tested:

If you have any symptoms of COVID-19, you can the following places to be tested

Mt Hagen General Hospital, Pabrabuk, Toboga, Tambul, Bukapena, Tinsley and Kotna. Only MHH does the vaccines at this time.

Operating hours of testing facilities

Monday to Friday 9-3.

About the COVID-19 Test

Testing for COVID-19 involves collecting nasal or throat swabs. These samples are then transferred to the nearest laboratory that is set up to test for COVID-19.

If you are tested for COVID-19 but aren't displaying serious symptoms you will be sent home to isolate while you wait for the test results. This may take several days. If you are really sick you may be admitted to hospital for treatment.

The Mt Hagen General Hospital and some other testing sites are using rapid test kits where your result is known with 15 minutes however, we are also able to complete Gene Xpert testing as well and this is done for symptomatic patients as well.

MHH has also completed a PCR Lab – the gold standard test and are awaiting reagents to commence this work as well.

If the result is positive, a Doctor or nurse will tell you what to do next depending on your symptoms. If you are struggling to breath you will most likely be admitted to the COVID-19 isolation unit. If your symptoms are mild, you will be allowed to home isolate.

Treatment

There is no specific treatment for COVID-19 infection. Antibiotics are not effective against viral infections.

Vaccine

Papua New Guinea has one COVID-19 vaccine available:

the AstraZeneca vaccine.

This vaccine has been provisionally approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA).

How is the COVID-19 vaccine given?

The vaccine is given via an injection into your upper arm by a health professional who has been trained in giving the COVID-19 vaccine. To get the full benefit of the vaccine you will need two

injections. It's really important you have your second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine to ensure you have maximum immunity.

Your second dose of the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine should be administered approximately 28 days – 90 days from your first vaccination.

Who can receive the vaccine?

Currently in Papua New Guinea the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine has been approved for adults aged 16 years and over.

Who *cannot* get the COVID-19 vaccine?

You must not get a COVID-19 vaccine if you have had any of the following:

- Anaphylaxis (a severe allergic reaction) to a previous dose of the same COVID-19 vaccine
- Anaphylaxis after exposure to any ingredient of the COVID-19 vaccine.

If you have recently had any other vaccine (e.g. flu vaccine) you should wait at least 7 days to have the COVID-19 vaccine.

Pregnant and breastfeeding women

If you are breastfeeding you can receive a COVID-19 vaccine at any time. You do not need to stop breastfeeding before or after vaccination.

Side effects

All medicines and vaccines can cause side effects. If you do experience any side effects, most of them are minor and temporary. However, some side effects may need medical attention.

As with any vaccine, you may have some side effects after receiving a COVID-19 vaccine.

Common side effects after COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca include:

- pain, swelling, tenderness, redness or itching at the injection site
- tiredness
- headache
- muscle pain
- nausea
- fever and chills
- feeling unwell
- joint pain.

Less common side effects after COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca include

: • enlarged lymph nodes

- pain in limb
- dizziness
- decreased appetite
- stomach pain.

Rare side effects that have been reported after COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca are:

- Severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis):
 - o Anaphylaxis after COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca is very rare.
- . • A condition called thrombosis with thrombocytopenia syndrome (TTS)

Remember your second appointment. It is important that you receive two doses of COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca, about 12 weeks apart. The second dose will provide you with better protection against COVID-19.

Other resources:

- For up-to-date global information visit the [WHO](#).
- For up-to-date Papua New Guinea information and resources visit the [Ministry for Health PNG](#) website.
- [COVID 19 Awareness PNG](#)
- [Australian Ministry For Health](#)