



## **COVID-19 Delta Variant Factsheet**

This factsheet contains information you should know about **COVID-19 Delta Variant** to protect yourself and others.

### **1. What is the Delta variant and why was it classified as a variant of concern (VOC)?**

Variants are viruses that have changed or mutated. Variants are common with coronaviruses; however, a SARS-CoV-2 variant becomes a variant of concern (VOC) when its changes have a clinical or public health significance that affects one or more of:

- transmissibility (spread) **OR**
- virulence (severity of disease) or change in clinical disease presentation **OR**
- vaccine effectiveness **OR**
- diagnostic testing or therapeutics.

The Delta variant meets the definition of a variant of concern (VOC) as we know that where the Delta variant is identified, it really rapidly takes off and spreads between people more easily than other variants identified earlier on. As of 6<sup>th</sup> July 2021, the Delta variant had been reported in 104 countries worldwide including Zimbabwe. While it has been shown to have increased transmissibility, more studies are still under way to determine whether it causes more severe disease (virulent) or has any impact on public health and social measures (PHSM).

### **2. How is the delta variant different from other variants we have experienced before?**

The Delta variant has shown higher transmissibility (infects people more efficiently than other variants). Currently data on effectiveness of public health and social measures (PHSM) is still being studied. PHSMs are measures or actions by individuals, institutions, communities, local and national governments and international bodies to slow or stop the spread of an infectious disease, such as COVID-19.

### **3. What are the signs and symptoms of the Delta variant?**

Currently the symptoms and signs of the Delta Variant are not that different from other known variants that cause COVID-19 such as fever, cough, tiredness, runny nose, sore throat, diarrhea, headache, loss of taste or smell, difficulty breathing or shortness of breath, chest pain or pressure



#### **4. Can the current COVID-19 testing methods detect the delta variant?**

The current PCR methods are able to detect the Delta variant. We in Zimbabwe were able to detect the positive samples from Kwekwe and on sequencing they were all Delta positive. The reason is most diagnostic kits can detect 2 or 3 of gene proteins that are part of the virus. Most of the kits detect what is called the S protein, so for as long as the S protein is there the PCR kit currently in use in the country can detect the Delta variant. However, there are PCR kits which are being manufactured which detect specific variants of concern, directly from PCR without need for sequencing. But currently we do not have these in the country.

#### **5. Is prevention of delta variant different from the methods we have been using all along?**

**NO**, stay safe by taking some simple precautions, such as physical distancing, wearing a mask, keeping rooms well ventilated, avoiding crowds, cleaning your hands, covering sneezes and coughs, and more.

#### **6. Are the current vaccines effective against the delta variant?**

Vaccines do offer protection against severe disease by the Delta variant; possible reduced protection against symptomatic disease and infection. Protection offered against severe disease also means protection against hospitalization and significantly reduced risk of deaths.

#### **7. Why should a person continue observing other preventive measures when they have been vaccinated?**

- A person who is fully vaccinated may still get infected, and get mild or moderate disease and they need to protect themselves from the disease.
- A person who is fully vaccinated may also get the virus even though they may not get the disease. Whether they get the disease or not the presence of virus in them may pose a hazard to other unprotected persons around them if they do not practice public health and social measures.

#### **8. How do you manage COVID-19 at home?**

##### **If the test result confirms that you have COVID-19**

- Continue to strictly observe self-isolation if the health workers who diagnosed you tell you that you do not need to be admitted to hospital.



- If you are not able to effectively observe self-isolation standards, inform your Village Health Worker/ Community Health Worker, or health worker who will advise an alternative isolation centre where you can stay to safeguard your household from risk of getting infected.
- You will have to stay in isolation for 10 days from the day you test positive if you do not have any symptoms.
- You will have to stay in isolation for 10 days plus an additional 3 days of no symptoms if you have shown some symptoms on testing.
- Continue to take your other medicines as usual if you have other conditions and get monitored e.g. for blood pressure control or diabetes control.
- If you develop worsening or new symptoms e.g. fever, persistent dry cough, fatigue, sore throat, difficulty breathing, diarrhea /vomiting, immediately call 2019, or alert your Village Health Worker/ Community Health Worker / health worker for re-assessment and possible transfer to a health facility.
- **Currently there are no specific medicines for curing COVID-19.**
- Try and sleep on your stomach most of the time. This may help you breathe better.

#### 9. Is steaming recommended for management of COVID-19?

Steaming is **NOT** a recommended method to manage COVID-19. However, you are free to do whatever you believe makes you feel better. You can use remedies such as paracetamol for fever or pain. Make sure you eat a balanced diet and drink enough fluids.

#### 10. Should you wear double masks for delta variant prevention?

Double masking is not recommended as it has not been shown to offer added protection against any of the SARS-COV-2 variants.

**You can get correct information from trustworthy sources such as health workers, public health officials, WHO, AFRICA CDC and UNICEF.**

**You can also use the following platforms to get more information:**

**Whatsapp hub:** Send Hi to +263 714 734 593

**Toll free hotlines:** 2019 or your local COVID-19 hotline

Ministry of Health and Child Care website, Twitter handle, Facebook page

**Zimbabwe COVID-19 Resources:**

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1RIYhh89lmJJxNvILFSE-oKhFBRtOgY5T?usp=sharing>

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