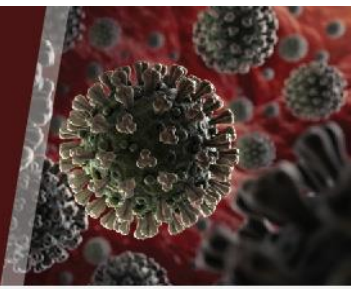


COVID-19 Press Release Update 8 September 2022



Port Vila, 8 September 2022: The Ministry of Health wish to update the public on the current situation of COVID-19 in the country and the appropriate public and social measures.

As of 8 September 2022, there are 77 reported active cases of COVID-19 in Vanuatu. This is an increase compared to the previous two-week period. There are likely to be many undetected COVID-19 cases in Vanuatu because of limited testing and reporting. It is also likely that the number of cases and hospitalisations will increase for at least the next few weeks. Re-infections have been detected in people who were previously infected in Vanuatu.

The Ministry of Health continue to review the situation and will provide updates to the public as needed.

The variant circulating is Omicron. There has never been delta variant detected in the community in Vanuatu and this variant is no longer considered a threat globally. Samples have been sent to Australia for further testing with results expected within the next week.

The Ministry of Health re-emphasizes the importance of public and social measures. In order to slow the spread of COVID-19 in Vanuatu, the public are encouraged to:

1. Wash your hands frequently with soap and water, or use hand sanitizer. Government departments and business houses are requested to ensure handwashing stations are working and are being used correctly.
2. People are encouraged to wear masks and practice physical distancing in closed, crowded and confined spaces.
3. If you experience any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 then get tested. Common symptoms include cough, fever, headache, aches and pains, runny nose, sore throat, tiredness and fatigue.

Testing is available at health facilities and pharmacies for those with symptoms.

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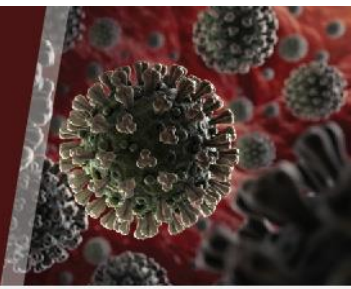
4. If you experience symptoms but cannot get tested then stay at home and reduce your contact or wear a mask when with other people.
5. Isolate until there has been no fever and no worsening or new symptoms for a least 48 hours. Medical care should be sought if symptoms have not improved within 5 days or if you experience any danger sign. Danger signs include difficulty breathing, loss of speech or mobility, appear confused or unable to stay awake or wake up, or ongoing chest pain or chest feels tight like someone is sitting on it, severe headache for a few days, and feeling progressively weaker.
6. If you have contact with someone who is confirmed to have COVID-19 and have no symptoms, you should practice handwashing, wear a mask in public and practice physical distancing for 5 days where possible.
7. COVID-19 vaccines including boosters continue to protect against severe disease, hospitalization and death from circulating variants. If you have not received your primary COVID-19 vaccine series, come forward to get vaccinated. If you have completed your primary series, then come forward for your first or second booster dose. Information on vaccination is provided by respective provincial health services.

Travellers

Due to the current circulation of COVID-19 in Vanuatu, travellers represent a minimal additional risk. Therefore, as of Monday 12 of September 2022 there will be two changes to the requirements for international travellers to Vanuatu.

Firstly, the requirement for testing for COVID-19 before travel to Vanuatu is removed. Anyone intending to travel to Vanuatu will not need to get tested beforehand if they have no symptoms of COVID-19. We

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continue to urge that anyone who is sick with COVID-19 or other symptoms should postpone their travel to Vanuatu.

The second change is that masks are no longer required to be worn on flights to Vanuatu and at the airport upon arrival to Vanuatu. However, the Ministry of Health continue to recommend their use, especially for those who are vulnerable to severe COVID-19. Airlines and vessels may request masks be worn under specific conditions.

Travellers to Vanuatu including tourists who test positive to COVID-19 while in Vanuatu will be requested to isolate. For tourists, this can be done at a hotel or resort. Visitors are encouraged to have travel insurance.

With the reinforcement of public and social measures, we hope that the spread of COVID-19 in Vanuatu will be curbed. We call on the public to undertake the measures I have outlined. We know what to do and have been through this before. Let us all take rapid action to prevent any further illness.

Further information is available on the COVID-19 website at www.covid19.gov.vu , through the 119 Health Information Hotline, or at the Health Promotions Vanuatu Facebook page.