



*Republic of Palau*

# Ministry of Health

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## PRESS RELEASE

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### MOH ADVICE ON COVID-19 SELF-CARE AND SPITTING ETIQUETTE

February 24, 2020

#### KEY POINTS:

- As of February 24, 2020, there are **NO SUSPECTED CASES** of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Palau.
- Flight and traveler restrictions from mainland China, Hong Kong, and Macau to Palau remain in effect until March 31, 2020.
- MOH and border control agencies continue to conduct health screening at airport and seaport for all arriving visitors to Palau. Almost 7,000 incoming travelers have undergone screenings at all ports of entry. **All travelers with fever or respiratory symptoms are urged to exercise self-care during their stay.**
- MOH continues to urge the public to practice basic preventive measures including **respiratory etiquette (cover your cough and sneeze with a clean tissue or your sleeve) and proper hand hygiene (frequent handwashing with soap & warm water or hand rub with 70% alcohol-based sanitizer).**

As of Monday, February 24, 2020 THERE ARE **NO SUSPECTED CASES** of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in the Republic of Palau. However, the country remains on high alert and continues to screen individuals who enter the Republic, specifically at the airport and seaports. The health screening process has been extended to March 31, 2020.

In addition to health screening at the points of entry, the Republic of Palau's Ministry of Health (MOH) continues to advise the public to practice measures that prevent respiratory infections such as proper hand washing with soap & water or 70% alcohol-based sanitizer; respiratory etiquette like covering your nose & mouth with the sleeve of your shirt or disposable tissue when coughing or sneezing; and avoiding close contact with anyone showing respiratory illness symptoms.

COVID-19 is spread between people through air droplets when a person coughs or sneezes, skin-to-skin contact especially with someone confirmed to have the virus, and physical contact with contaminated surfaces. Symptoms include fever, coughing, ~~and~~ shortness of breath, runny nose, and sore throat.

If you should experience any of these symptoms, MOH advises you to practice self-care:

1. Stay home, except to get medical care. You must also keep yourself separated from other people in your household. This is to limit the risk of exposure for other people.
2. When seeking medical care, please call the ER before going to the hospital.
3. Avoid sharing personal household items such as dishes, glasses, cups, spoons, forks, knives, towels, or bedding.
4. AVOID SHARING spit bottles (olbaol) with other people and DO NOT SPIT in public areas/open spaces (e.g., parking lots, public trashcans, etc.). COVID-19 may be spread through the droplets of spit from your mouth.
5. Wear a facemask when you are around other people and cover your coughs/sneezes with the shirt of your sleeve or disposable napkin/tissue in order to prevent the spread of infection. Remember to only use a napkin/tissue once and dispose it properly in a trashcan.

The Ministry of Health will continue to monitor the COVID-19 outbreak and advise the public on any developments. For more information about the novel Coronavirus Disease 2019, contact the MOH Hotline at **488-0555**.