



Coronavirus disease (Covid-19) update as at 4 March 2020

30 Jan 2020 WHO Director General declares COVID-19 as a **public health emergency of international concern**. Following this declaration, Ministry of Health & Sports and WHO Myanmar convened coordination meetings with development partners, UN agencies and International/national humanitarian organizations dedicated to COVID-19 activities. Since there have been six successive coordination meetings which are envisaged to continue.

WHO updated COVID-19 case definitions on 27 Feb 2020 (<https://bit.ly/2Tf9ydg>). Further, WHO revised the risk assessment on 29 Feb 2020, which is now **very high** across all levels, China, regional, and global.

Ministry of Health & Sports, Myanmar, issued an initial flash proposal for Covid-19 activities totaling USD \$5 million. The proposal includes key public health measures to prevent and contain any outbreak at an early stage, including surveillance at community level, points of entry, risk communication, nonpharmaceutical medical & laboratory supplies, awareness raising. WHO and partners support implementation. Further, monitoring through an open-source web-based platform for partners' inputs has been created and is functional at <http://bit.ly/2UMnX1L>. This enables real-time resource mapping and analysis.

Further, a comprehensive contingency plan for Covid-19 and emerging respiratory disease outbreak response in Myanmar is currently being developed.

To minimize the general risk of transmission of acute respiratory infections, simple prevention measures are highly recommended:

- wash hands **frequently** with soap & water
- avoid **unprotected** contact with wild animals. wash your hands thoroughly after contact with an animal
- **cover** coughs, sneezes with tissues or clothing, maintain distance, wash hands with soap & water
- if you have fever, cough, shortness of breath, **seek** advice & **share** travel history with health professionals
- **avoid** close contact with people suffering from acute respiratory infections
- smoking **harms** lung health -- if you smoke, quit

6 ways to prevent Covid-19 in 60 seconds, video link <https://bit.ly/2lxWhql>. Our newsletters **novel corona virus (nCoV)**, of 24 January & updates as at 7 February 2020, have details in English and Myanmar languages, at the adjacent links.

In addition, more information by Ministry of Health & Sports is available at <https://bit.ly/3bOIYiH>.

Global situation of Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)*

Globally confirmed cases

4 Mar 20	20 Feb 20	12 Feb 20
90,090	75,748	45,171

China confirmed cases & deaths cases

80,422	74,675	44,730
2,984	2,121	1,114

Outside of China

confirmed cases, countries & deaths cases

12,668	1,073	441
76	26	24
214	8	1

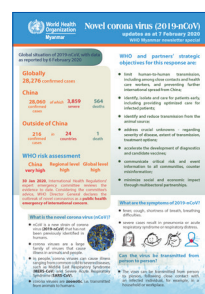
WHO risk assessment

China	Regional level	Global level
very high	very high	very high

Online courses related to COVID-19 can be found at the OpenWHO platform:

- A general introduction to emerging respiratory viruses high <https://bit.ly/37LICFW>
- Critical care of severe acute respiratory infections <https://bit.ly/3bS7dfD>
- Health and safety briefing for respiratory diseases - ePROTECT <https://bit.ly/2HJ9XhG>

* Covid-19 situation report-44 published on 5 Mar 2020



7 Feb 2020
in English
<https://bit.ly/2vfHCMM>
in Myanmar
<https://bit.ly/2HagDF5>



24 Jan 2020
in English -
<https://bit.ly/30UVRT6>
in Myanmar -
<https://bit.ly/313eHHO>

Preventing harmful effects of air pollution

Air pollution is a growing concern globally. A majority of the world's population live now in areas that exceed WHO's ambient air quality standards. Air pollutants are greenhouse gases, heating the planet, and air pollution is linked to respiratory, cardiovascular and non-communicable diseases. Hence minimizing air pollutants helps fight climate change -- **and** improve health.

Myanmar is facing a double burden of indoor and outdoor air pollution. Use of fuels for household cooking (kerosene, wood, crop waste) often contributes to indoor as well as outdoor air pollution. Women, children and elderly are especially at risk. Urbanization and transportation further add to outdoor pollution.

In Myanmar, key air pollutants are monitored in Yangon, Mandalay and Naypyitaw. In 2019, in Yangon Region, the average annual concentration of PM2.5 (particulate matter of 2.5 µm or less, a key indicator for air pollution) is 31.18 µg/m³, as an average of two measuring stations. In 2018, from the same measuring stations, the annual average was 29.83 µg/m³.

A fresh further newsletter on air pollution is under preparation. Our previous newsletters *special* on this subject - of 9 May 2019 & 16 May 2018 - cover outdoor & indoor air pollution. They contain information how we all can help reduce this problem, to stay healthy and help fight climate change. Details available at <https://bit.ly/2vX2oBi> & <https://bit.ly/32jXQRL>.



Rotavirus vaccine introduction



Media briefing for rotavirus vaccine introduction, Chatrium Hotel, Yangon. 14 January 2020

Ministry of Health & Sports, Myanmar has taken a big step forward -- and introduced rotavirus vaccination into the national immunization programme from 1st February 2020.

This is the 12th vaccine which is included in the national calendar of immunization -- free of charge to all eligible children in Myanmar -- to protect from a whole range of vaccine preventable illnesses.

WHO position paper on rotavirus vaccination is available at <https://bit.ly/2PG771f> with Ministry of Health & Sports' news available at <https://bit.ly/2TsRifn>.

Myanmar polio updates



A child receives oral polio vaccine, Thandaung township, Kayin State. 21 July 2019

Six months now passed without any confirmed vaccine-derived poliovirus type 1 (cVDPV1) cases in Myanmar. This is despite active surveillance being implemented in the country. The date of onset of paralysis of the last confirmed case from Hpa-pun townships, Myanmar was 9 August 2019.

Our special newsletter on preventing polio of 5 August 2019 in English and Myanmar languages -- available at <https://bit.ly/33JbygO> and <https://bit.ly/37yRM8U>.

Early warning alerts and response system

WHO Myanmar is supporting implementation of Early Warning Alerts and Response System (EWARS) in Kachin State, after initial training in November 2019.

Following evaluation, Rakhine and Kachin States are now implementing EWARS to complement routine diseases surveillance in conflict-affected areas. Furthermore, introduction of real-time, online EWARS reporting was facilitated to ensure rapid detection and response to suspected disease outbreaks.



Early warning alerts and response system training in Myitkyina township, Kachin State, 1 Nov 2019.

Strengthening health emergency operations Centre

WHO international expert visited Myanmar to provide technical support to Ministry of Health & Sports (MoHS) to develop operational manual for health emergency operations centre (HEOC). In addition, orientation on incident management system and emergency operation centre has taken place. WHO corporately continues to support HEOC planning and implementation. In addition, IT equipment for central HEOC in Naypyitaw was procured. Further, MoHS and WHO partake in EOC network meetings.



Simulation exercise of National Health Emergency Operations Centre at Naypyitaw, 8 Aug 2019.

MoHS, WHO, Public Health England, others jointly organize capacity-building activities including incident managers training and simulation exercise, using pandemic influenza scenario (using HEOC) during 2019. Additional HEOC training followed and is further planned during 2020.

Health cluster leadership & coordination

Ministry of Health & Sports and WHO Myanmar co-lead the national health cluster and co-facilitated development of its 2019 workplans. These were implemented through close follow-up of key activities and active monitoring.

WHO facilitated the monitoring survey of health cluster coordination performance -- to review and improve its performance. The results from the survey were validated in national and subnational health cluster meetings, at Rakhine State and Kachin State, and will be incorporated in the overall strategy moving forward. During 2020, coordination could further improve by inception of health cluster meetings at Lashio, northern Shan State, too.

Furthermore, Ministry of Health & Sports (MoHS) and WHO supported a central level meeting to strengthen health services provision in Rakhine State, in relation to Rakhine Advisory Commission

recommendations. This was organized at Naypyitaw on 23 October 2019. It provided a landmark coordination opportunity for open dialogue among the MoHS, Rakhine State government and national and international health cluster partners.



Emergency health care service provision at War Taung new displacement site, Kyauktaw township, Rakhine State, 8 August 2019



World TB Day 24 March 2020

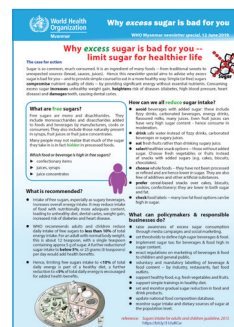


The motto of World TB Day 2020 is **'It's time.'** It puts the emphasis on urgency to act on commitments made by global leaders. These are to scale up access to TB prevention and treatment, build accountability, ensure sufficient sustainable financing - research included. Further, to promote an end to stigma and discrimination, promote equitable, rights-based, people-centred TB response. It also urges everybody to take action. You can make your own motto **"It's time to do: do → act"**.

In Myanmar, TB services are much improved with combined efforts of all TB partners, private sector and Ethnic Health Organizations. At the same time, not all TB prevention and care activities can be implemented by the health sector alone. Based on the results of the recent TB prevalence survey, about **170,000** people contract TB annually, and *one fourth* of them are missing, leading to transmission in the community. Therefore, multi-sector engagement continues to be needed for early and correct diagnosis, better treatment, prevention through education and counselling, creating enabling environment and social protection. Added information is available at <https://bit.ly/2lbaYze>.

Why excess sugar is bad for you

Sugar is so common, much consumed. It is an ingredient of many foods -- from known sweets to unexpected sources (juices, sauces, bread). Hence our newsletter *special* explains *why excess sugar is bad for you*. It provides simple advice to eat in a more balanced, healthy way.



Why excess sugar is bad for you, is about limiting sugar intake for healthier lives and contains five keys to a healthy diet. It is available in English and Myanmar languages, at <https://bit.ly/3aw5gEh> and <https://bit.ly/2uSkx2W>.

World Health Day -- support nurses & midwives 7 April 2020



WHO designated 2020 as the **"year of the nurse and midwife"**. This is in honour of the 200th anniversary of Florence Nightingale -- **and** of the world's 22 million nurses and two million midwives. They make up half of the global health workforce -- providing health care everywhere.

Myanmar joins this global commemoration. Nurses and midwives play a vital role for many service areas. For example, lifesaving immunization, family planning, safe delivery, health advice generally. Nurses and midwives help ensure newborn and children survive and thrive, they help look after older people and meeting everyday's essential health needs.

Therefore, we need to **invest** to *strengthen nursing and midwifery personnel*. Nurses and midwives are acknowledged as a backbone of every health system world wide, yet in many countries there are not enough of them. WHO Director General Dr Tedros Ghebreyesus calls upon all countries to invest in nurses and midwives, as part of committing to health for all.

Sometimes nurses and midwives lack the means to deliver the basic health services people need to live healthy lives. **2020 is a year to change this!**

Important dates

**South East Asia Regional conference to
strengthen health information system
in support of evidence-based policy and
decision-making, Yangon, Myanmar**
mid-2020

World TB Day
24 March 2020

World Health Day
7 April 2020

World Malaria Day
25 April 2020

World Immunization Week
24-30 April 2020