



Department of Health & Wellness

*Communications on this subject
should be addressed to:
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Press Release

SAINT LUCIA RECORDS EIGHTEENTH CASE OF COVID-19

As of May 2, 2020 the World Health Organization reported a total of 3, 267, 184 confirmed cases of COVID-19 globally, with 229, 971 deaths. There are now 1, 340, 591 confirmed cases in the region of the Americas. The affected region includes Dominican Republic (7, 288), Haiti (81), Barbados (81), Jamaica (422), Cuba (1,537), Dominica (16), Grenada (20), Trinidad and Tobago (116), Guyana (82), Antigua and Barbuda (24), Bahamas (81), Saint Vincent and Grenadines (16), Guadeloupe (152), Martinique (179), Puerto Rico (1,575), US Virgin Islands (66), and Cayman Islands (73).

As on Sunday, May 3, 2020 Saint Lucia recorded another case of COVID-19 bringing the national total of confirmed cases to 18. A total of 52 samples were tested on Saturday, May 2, 2020. The individual is a 51 year old male who sought care at one of our respiratory clinics with a dry cough but none of the accompanying symptoms of COVID-19. He has no known travel history and we are in the process of investigating the source. The individual is currently in care within our respiratory hospital and is responding well to care. The Ministry of Health's contact tracing team is undertaking the necessary follow-up for the identification and quarantine of contacts of this case. The emergence of cases on the East coast continues to be of concern to the Ministry of Health as we continue to receive reports of entry through unofficial channels. We continue to strengthen our surveillance in these areas and anticipate the detection of more cases as community testing increases.

COVID-19 poses a risk of transmission to every individual irrespective of age, socio-economic status or gender. However, data from the Epidemiology Department indicates the existing respiratory clinic services are largely being accessed by females. It is an established trend that men tend to be delayed in their seeking of clinical care, sometimes until the condition has advanced significantly. Our males are important segments of society especially in their roles of spouses, fathers, breadwinners, leaders and protectors. And as such when our men are protective of their health choices it benefits a large cross section of our society. We particularly encourage men who may be feeling symptomatic to also seek care early as this can prevent possible complication and allows for achieving better health outcomes.

The Ministry of Health notes that data trends for the region of the Americas, and more specifically the Caribbean, demonstrate continued increases in the number of cases of COVID-19. This should highlight prior statements which we have issued cautioning that we should maintain our level of vigilance as we are still at risk for COVID-19. It is important to monitor one's health and take note of feelings of being unwell which include a dry cough, fever, sore throat, shortness of breath, body aches well as loss of smell or taste seek care in a timely manner. All of these, alone or in combination could be indications of COVID-19 infection. Care can be obtained at no cost at any of our five respiratory clinics island-wide and if further information is required on this service the public may call the 311 hotline.

The Department of Health and Wellness will continue provide the public with regular updates on COVID-19. In the interim we encourage everyone to maintain the recommended hygiene measures:

- wash hands frequently with soap and flowing water
- use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol where soap and water are not available
- cover coughs or sneezes with the inner elbow, or a tissue and after throw the tissue into a bin and wash hands

- use a cloth mask when going into public; do not share these masks with others and wash them daily
- Maintain physical distancing protocols at all times

Together, through these actions, we shall be able to reduce the threat of COVID-19.

For more information please contact the Office of the Chief Medical Officer or the Epidemiology Unit, at 468-5309/468-5317 respectively