

# COVID-19

CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019

**C**COVID-19 is an infectious disease that can lead to severe respiratory illness and even death.

**CORONAVIRUSES** are viruses that circulate among animals but can also affect human.

**COVID-19** attacks the body when you come into close contact with an infected person (Kissing, sleeping together, hugging, shaking hands sneezing, talking).

It affects both children and adults but mostly the elderly and people with low immunity are at a higher risk.

It is spread through droplets (secretion from someone coughing/sneezing) and coming into close contact with items used by infected persons.

Time between infection and the onset of clinical symptoms of diseases range from 2 to 14 days.

## SYMPTOMS

Patients with COVID-19 have experienced mild to severe respiratory illness.

Symptoms can include

**FEVER**



\*Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure.

**COUGH**



**SHORTNESS OF BREATH**



Seek medical advice if you develop symptoms, and have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19 or if you live in or have recently been in an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19.

## PREVENTION IS BETTER BECAUSE THERE IS NO CURE

<p>How to avoid infection or spreading the virus</p> <p>Wash your hands regularly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds</p>	<p>Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth</p>	<p>Cover your mouth or nose when coughing or sneezing</p>
<p>Use only disposable tissues, and dispose of them immediately after use</p>	<p>Avoid close contact with anyone showing respiratory symptoms</p>	<p>Monitor travel advice on Smartraveller <a href="http://smartraveller.gov.au">smartraveller.gov.au</a></p>
<p>Stay at home when you are sick</p>		

## WHEN YOU COUGH OR SNEEZE



### CATCH IT

Germs spread easily. Always carry tissues and use them to catch your cough or sneeze.



### BIN IT

Germs can live for several hours on tissues. Dispose off your tissue as soon as possible



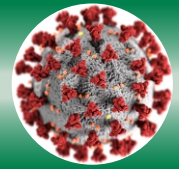
### KILL IT

Hands can transfer germs to every surface you touch. Clean your hands as soon as you can

**NB: if tissues are not readily available, cough into a flexed elbow.**



# MEASURES TO FORESTALL SPREAD OF COVID-19



DR. DANIEL ASARE, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

**T**he Hospital has taken the measures below following the directive by the President of the Republic for social distancing to forestall the potential spread

of the Covid-19.

1. The Hospital has decided to suspend all Elective Surgical cases. Only Emergency Surgical cases will now be taken care of.
2. The appointment system of the Hospital shall be enforced and patients are advised that they should only come to the OPD when it is really very necessary for them to report for care.
3. The Hospital has also instituted pre-triage monitoring of patients coming to the various Outpatient Departments (OPDs).
4. All rotations/internships of students have

been suspended until further notice.

5. Various departmental morning meetings and all other workshops/conferences are equally suspended sine die.
6. Visits by patients' relatives to the Hospital have been restricted to only two (2) visitors while the patient is on admission. In the case of Child Health, only the parent/guardian are permitted to visit and all visitors shall be screened.
7. Staff and visitors to the Hospital are all encouraged to observe the basic safety protocols which include hand washing with soap under running water, cover your mouth and nose with a flexed elbow or tissue when sneezing or coughing and avoid close contact with infected persons, among others.

These measures are being implemented with immediate effect to minimize overcrowding at the Outpatient Departments for the safety of our patients and staff. We, therefore, urge all to cooperate with us for a successful implementation.

## MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCE VISITS KORLE BU

**T**he Ministry of Water Resources and Sanitation paid a working visit to Management of the Hospital to assess water flow in our facilities.

The team was led by the Ministry's Deputy Minister Hon. Patrick Yaw Boamah who indicated that a comprehensive assessment of the Hospital's old pipelines and valves will be done to make sure water flow in the Hospital is not disrupted.

He assured that the Ministry will provide technical advice in the four new projects captured in the 2019 budget when the construction works begin.



The Hon. Dep. Min. with officials from GWCL and the Hospital around to inspect our pipe lines

# COVID-19 SCREENING AT THE UDS



Surgical Department



Gynaecology Department



Polyclinic/Family Medicine Sub-BMC



Stroke Unit



Dental Unit



Medical Sub-BMC



Cardio Centre



Eye Centre



Child Health Department



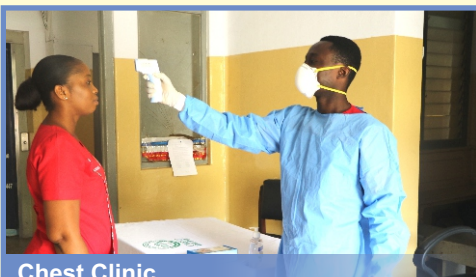
Maternity Department



Psychiatry Sub-BMC



Fevers Unit



Chest Clinic



Radiotherapy Department



ENT Unit



Radiology Department



Central Administration



Pathology Department



Diabetes Unit



MRI Center



Plastics and Burns Centre

# COVID-19: Boosting Your Immune System is Your Best Bet

The coronavirus disease (Covid-19) is like the good old flu. Only your immune system can really fight it once infected. No known medicine can, for now.

As we strictly keep to the WHO/GHS recommended

**5. AVOID STRESS.** Stress harms the immune system badly. Covid-19 as a global pandemic with its panic is enough stress. Don't add up more. Listen to or read Covid-19 info from only reliable sources. Remember the undue fear and panic infect faster than the coronavirus itself. Don't harm your immune system even before Covid-19 comes in.



personal hygiene, consider the following in the bid to ward off the infection or fight it when it so occurs:

**1. EAT HEALTHY.** Now more than ever, cut back on fats, salt and sugars; eat a variety of fruits and vegetables daily. Food is the best medicine for the immune system.

**2. DRINK ENOUGH WATER.** At least 4 sachets of water, in addition to healthy fluids like coconut water, fresh fruit and vegetable juices.



Have no fear. Stay positive. Just do your bit and pray. This, too, shall pass.

Always remember, **FOOD IS YOUR BEST MEDICINE.**

**3. HAVE ENOUGH REST AND SLEEP.** With social distancing a highly recommended precautionary measure against Covid-19, you have no excuse of extra work, extra fun. Sleep at least 7-8 hours a day. Your immune system needs that.



**4. BE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE.** Exercises help the immune system. Your room, even bedroom, is enough space to stay active. Dance, do press-ups or sit-ups, skip, go up and down the staircase, walk in your compound or garden. Find a safe and simple exercise to do daily.

*DESMOND PAA KWESI HACKMAN (RO, RD, LD, Msc)  
Registered Dietician and Nutritionist  
Regulatory Officer, Food and Drugs Authority*

## Views on Ghana's Covid-19 Response

First, I want to commend the President and the Ministry of Health for some of the efforts so far, albeit belated. A lot of the measures like the border closure and the testing of all the contacts being traced that was announced should have been done some 2 weeks ago i.e. 12<sup>th</sup> March, 2020 when we recorded our first case!

We now have a problem of community infections. What we should be mindful of is ensuring that these community infections are not in any of the densely populated areas in Accra or Kumasi...else, we should be ready for a long haul...

Our situation is even dire because of the number of testing sites and its accessibility. We're told Noguchi and Kumasi Centre for Collaborative Research (KCCR) have the capacity to run in excess of 1000 tests in a day if push comes to shove. However, they are doing a test turn-around-time of 6 hours and in many instances even more (than 6 hours). You see, an essential quality dimension in this Covid-19 response is timeliness! Within that 6 hours, a lot could happen in terms of transmission of the infection to others. I hear someone tell me; suspects will be quarantined but this is not in all cases.

It was interesting to hear the President finally heed the call to make testing accessible and to open up the criteria to include asymptomatic (*or people who are not showing any signs and symptoms*). The Public Health Reference Labs should be quickly equipped and capacitated to complement the efforts of Noguchi and KCCR! Let's heed the advice of the WHO-DG on the urgent need to "test, test and test". We cannot continue fighting an enemy we're not seeing or is invisible!

The increase in access to testing is also necessary because it will enable the healthcare system to pick up cases early and start case management. This is key because it can reduce significantly the number of people whose conditions might progress to the next stage i.e. critical/severe and might need hospitalization. At this stage, our health system will crumble like is happening in Italy and elsewhere! This will also seriously affect the safety of our healthcare staff! We have to do everything

possible to reduce the number of people who will need hospitalization...

Again, those doing the contact tracing and/or responsible for the data should be able to share where these contacts are residing, for instance, so everyone in the respective neighborhoods could be extra careful. Please don't say it will lead to stigmatization because it is necessary to enhance public health and safety. We are becoming very stingy with the amount of information we are sharing and it is adding to the public anxiety, fear and panic! I commend the leadership of the Ghana Health Service (GHS) with the support of partners for the creation of the website for Covid-19 but it is still not enough. The frequency of update is too slow and needs to be improved!

Furthermore is the protection of our frontline healthcare workers! This is very crucial. The current efforts is woefully inadequate...we cannot afford to have the number of health worker fatalities we are seeing in other countries! The Personal Protective Equipment (PPE's) should be made readily available and accessible. Until date, there has not even been one simulation done on our readiness and response! This is very belated now given that we have 204 confirmed cases (*with 5 mortalities as at 3<sup>rd</sup> April, 2020*) we are update dealing with now but...all these are necessary to boost their confidence in dealing with the situation. Another subject that is key for healthcare workers is also compensation.

How much are we going to pay them for this battle? What do we have for their families and dependents in the unlikely event that they lose their lives? What psychological and social support systems do we have available for healthcare workers who test positive in the line of duty? What do we have for their relations and families in the event that their loved ones have to be quarantined in the event of exposure? If these discussions are going on, let us make it public because we have to know!

Also, for me is the level of public education we're seeing. This is woefully inadequate and there is an urgent need to step-up else we are in trouble. People are still walking



<sup>1</sup><https://ghanahealthservice.org/covid19/>

# WORLD LYMPHEDEMA DAY



**W**orld Lymphoedema Day (WLD) is celebrated on 6 March. Lymphoedema (LE) is not a rare disease but a massive public health problem and raising awareness on this topic is crucial.

Lymphoedema is a swelling (oedema) or abnormal collection of fluid that develops when lymph fluid builds up in the tissues under the skin or sometimes deeper in the abdomen and chest areas. This happens because the lymphatic system is not working properly in that part of the body. It usually occurs in an arm or leg, but can also affect other parts of the body.

Lymphoedema can be either primary, which may be present at birth and develop at puberty or in midlife because of abnormal development of the lymphatic system, or secondary, as a result of treatment for other cancers such as breast, lymphoma, prostate, etc.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that over 250 million people worldwide have LE. WHO again estimates that over 120 million are infected with lymphatic filariasis leaving 40 million disfigured and incapacitated.

### How was the day celebrated?

The National Reconstructive Plastics Surgery & Burns Centre (NRPS&BC) on the 6th of March 2020 celebrated the WLD by organizing an open forum and education on the condition. At the forum, a maiden Lymphoedema support group was initiated where patients who have developed both primary and secondary LE were invited to be speakers.

These patients were from the Surgery, Oncology and Plastic Surgery and Burns Center. The patients shared their stories and through that motivated each other and understood that they were not in this fight alone. There was also the opportunity for health professionals such as a Breast Surgeon, Plastic Surgeon, Public Health Nurse and Physiotherapist to educate the patients on our roles in the management of their condition.

### About the lymphatic system

The lymphatic system is part of both the circulatory and immune systems. It consists of:

*Lymph vessels* – A large network of thin tubes found throughout the body. Lymph vessels carry lymph fluid from our tissues, organs and structures to the lymph nodes.

*Lymph fluid* – This normally clear fluid travels to and from the tissues in the body, carrying nutrients and taking away bacteria, viruses, abnormal cells and cell debris.

*Lymph nodes (glands)* – Small, bean-shaped structures found along the lymph vessels. Lymph nodes are located throughout the body, including in the neck, underarms, chest, abdomen and groin. The lymph nodes filter lymph fluid as it passes through the body, before emptying most of the fluid into the bloodstream.

*Other lymph tissue* – As well as lymph nodes, lymph tissue is found in other parts of the body including the spleen, bone marrow, thymus, tonsils and some lymph tissue in the digestive tract.

The lymph fluid, lymph nodes and lymph tissue contain white blood cells called lymphocytes, which help protect the body against disease and infection.

The condition can be caused by;

- Cancer tumors or lesions that cause blockages of the lymph system
- Surgery and/or radiation therapy to treat cancer
- Spread of a tumor to the lymph nodes
- Infection and/or injury to the lymphatic vessels
- Inflammation or scarring
- Temporary loss of lymphatic function

### Symptoms

- Pain, heat and/or redness in the affected area
- Persistent depressions in the skin when pressed
- A feeling of tightness or stiffness in the skin
- Swelling, most often in the hand, wrist to shoulder or toes, ankle to thigh
- Weakness or heavy feeling in the arms or legs.

# WORLD LYMPHEDEMA DAY



## Treatment options

**Exercises** - Light exercises such as walking and/or resistance training in which you move your affected limb may encourage lymph fluid drainage and help prepare you for everyday task. Regular physical activity reduces the severity and symptoms of lymphoedema by encouraging the lymph fluid to move around the body. It can also help you maintain a healthy weight.

**Massage** - This is a specialised type of massage that is performed by a trained lymphoedema physiotherapist. Mild pressure is applied to the skin around the affected area to move fluid towards lymph nodes that are draining normally. The technique used during Manual Lymphatic Drainage (MLD) will be different for each person depending on the location of the swelling and stage of LE.

**Compression therapy** - Compression therapy involves applying graduated pressure to the affected area to reduce swelling, contain swelling and soften any thickened tissue. There are different ways to apply compression: bandages and wraps, compression garments and intermittent pneumatic compression. Compression for the treatment of LE needs to be used on an ongoing basis: if stopped, the swelling will usually return.

**Complete decongestive therapy (CDT)** - provides a combination of regular skin care, exercises, manual lymphatic drainage (MLD), and compression bandaging. It may take a few days or up to several weeks to reduce the swelling and then you will be fitted with a compression garment.

**Lymph taping** - Some early research suggests that a special tape called kinesio tape can help lymph fluid drain from the affected area to working nodes. The tape is different from strapping tape, and your LE physiotherapist will tell you whether this could be part of your management plan.

**Laser treatment** - This treatment uses low-level laser to target cells in the lymphatic system. This may reduce the volume of lymph fluid in the affected area, any thickening of the skin and any pain. There is some evidence that laser treatment works well when used with lymphatic drainage and compression therapy. Research is ongoing to find the treatment that works best.

**Surgery** - Most people are able to manage LE with Complex Lymphatic Therapy (CLT) but surgery may be an option when lymphoedema doesn't respond to other treatments or you are not satisfied with standard treatment.

**Liposuction** - Liposuction removes fat from under the skin of the affected area but the limb will look smaller. It should only be an option when CLT cannot reduce the swelling. Liposuction can reduce swelling in the long term and the size of the affected area can be maintained when combined with compression therapy. This treatment is not a cure for lymphoedema - it is essential to continue wearing a compression garment.

**Lymphatic reconstruction (anastomosis)** - This uses microsurgery to repair or create a new pathway for the lymph fluid to drain out of the area. This technique appears to work better for people with early-stage lymphoedema. Further research on the long-term impact on people who have undergone this surgery is needed.

**Tissue transfer** - This involves transferring healthy lymph nodes from an unaffected area of the body to the affected limb. Further research is required into whether this technique is effective in the long term.

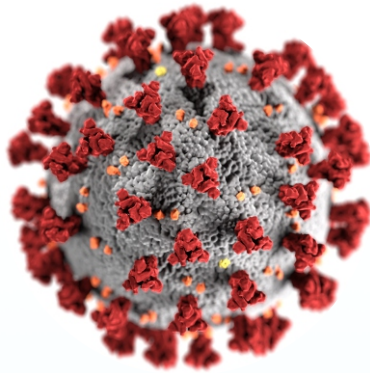
**Medicines** - There is no proven drug treatment for LE. Although diuretics (water pills) help remove fluid from the body when it is caused by heart or blood pressure problems, they don't work well for LE as lymph fluids are generally protein rich. Once the diuretic is stopped the fluid usually returns to the area affected by LE.

## Take home message

Early recognition, Referral, Appropriate intervention, Effective follow-up, Supported self-management, Improved outcomes and quality of life

Together we can address the incredible psycho-social burden of lymphoedema patients whose quality of life has been negatively transformed by this disease.

*Written by Alberta Amissah Rockson PT., Principal Physiotherapist and Team Head (Plastic Surgery and Burns Center).*



# COPING WITH STRESS DURING THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK

As the infection spreads, this is a trying time for many. These points could help you tide over the crisis.

**Keep talking:** It is normal to feel sad, stressed, confused, scared or angry during a crisis. Talking to people you trust can help. Contact your friends and family.



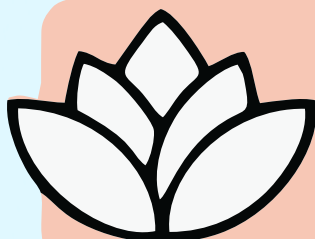
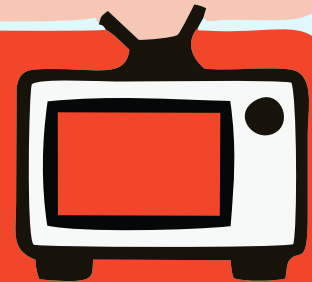
**Health is wealth:** If you must stay at home, maintain a health lifestyle - have a proper diet, sleep, and exercise. Maintain social contact with loved ones over phone and email.

**Keep away:** Don't resort to smoking, alcohol or drugs to deal with your stress. If you feel overwhelmed, talk to a health worker. Have a plan, where to go and how to seek help.



**Seek facts:** Gather information that will help you accurately determine your risk so that you can take reasonable precaution. Find a credible source you can trust.

**Limit exposure:** Limit worry and agitation by lessening the time you and your family spend watching or listening to media coverage that you perceive as upsetting.



**A challenge:** Draw on skills you have used in the past that have helped you get through previous adversities, and use those skills to manage your emotions during this challenge.



# GHANA KIDNEY ASSOCIATION MARKS WORLD KIDNEY DAY

The Hospital's Renal Dialysis Unit in collaboration with Ghana Kidney Association has marked this year's World Kidney Day with a Health walk, Free screening and public lecture in Koforidua, Eastern Region.

The Day saw a gathering of Nephrologists, kidney nurses and other health professionals from the Greater Accra Region, Ashanti Region, Sekondi Takoradi and Eastern Region to raise awareness on kidney-related diseases which kills about 5-10 million people globally every year.

The theme for this year was "Kidney Health for Everyone Everywhere-from Prevention to Detection and Equitable Access to care". Kidney diseases are silent killers, which can largely affect the quality of life.

At the celebration, the Ghana Kidney Association rolled out golden rules to reduce the risk of developing kidney disease. These measures are:

## Keep fit, Be active

This can help to maintain an ideal body weight, reduce your blood pressure and risk of Chronic Kidney Disease.

## Eat a healthy diet

This can help to maintain an ideal body weight, reduce your blood pressure, prevent diabetes, heart disease and other conditions associated with chronic kidney disease. Reduce your salt intake. The recommended sodium intake is 5-6 grams of salt per day.

## Check and control your blood sugar

About half of people who have diabetes do not know they have diabetes. You therefore, need to check your blood sugar level as part of your general body checkup.

## Check and control your blood pressure

About half of people who have high blood pressure do not know they have high blood pressure. Therefore, you need to check your blood pressure as part of your general body checkup. High blood pressure can damage your kidneys. The risk can be reduced with good control of blood pressure. Normal adult blood pressure level is

120/80mmHg.

## Appropriate fluid intake

The right level of fluid intake for any individual depends on many factors. Normally this means 8 cups, approximately 2 liters (quarts) per day for a healthy person. Consult your doctor on the appropriate fluid intake for your condition.

## Don't smoke

Smoking slows the flow of blood to the kidneys. When less blood reaches the kidneys, it can decrease their ability to function normally. Smoking also increases

the risk of kidney cancer by about 50 percent.

## Don't take over-the-counter anti-inflammatory/pain-killer pills regularly

Common drugs such as Non-steroidal Anti-Inflammatory (NSAIDs)/ pain-killer (e.g drugs like ibuprofen) can harm the kidneys if taken regularly. Taking just a few doses can do harm to your kidneys. If in doubt, check with your doctor or pharmacist.

## Get your kidney function checked if you have one or more of the 'high risk' factors

- ü You have diabetes
- ü You are obese
- ü You have hypertension
- ü You have a family history of kidney disease

Source: [www.worldkidneyday.org](http://www.worldkidneyday.org)



# DONATIONS ON COVID-19

## UNILEVER DONATES MEDICATED SOAPS

Unilever Ghana has donated 20 cartons of Lifebuoy soap to Hospital to aid in the fight against COVID-19 pandemic.

Receiving the items, the Chief Executive of the Hospital, Dr. Daniel Asare said the donation is timely and will equip the Hospital contain the Covid-19 pandemic, which has become a global menace.

"These items will help protect our clinicians in our bid to provide seamless service to our clients", he added.

The Medical Advisor to Unilever, Dr. Kweku Sarkodie said the donation is to help Korle Bu overcome some of its challenges in the fight against Covid-19.



the Hospital's holding bays.

Dr. Asare appealed to corporate Ghana and other philanthropic individuals to come on board to combat the surging demand for medical supplies and equipment.

The Sales and Marketing Lead of East Cantonment, Mr. Ebenezer Holm Graves said his company is ready to support Korle Bu provide the best of care to patients.

The Deputy Director of Nursing Services, Mrs. Grace Anyomi thanked Management of East Cantonments for their kind gesture.

## KORLE BU RECEIVES HELP FROM DELTA AGRO LTD

Delta Agro Limited, a local company that produces antiseptics and soaps has presented 210 cartons of medicated soap and Maram antiseptics to Korle Bu as part of its social support to healthcare.

The items valued at GHC 20,000 are to help Korle Bu prepare adequately in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic



## ECPLSUPPORTS THE FIGHT AGAINST COVID-19

East Cantonments Pharmaceuticals Ltd has donated 10 cartons of surgical gloves and 2 cartons of examination gloves to Korle Bu to aid in the Hospital's fight against the Covid-19 pandemic.

The items worth GHc 6,500 were received by the CEO, Dr. Daniel Asare, who called for support for other needed Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for



## MELCOM DONATES HAND SANITIZERS



Officials from Melcom Group of companies presented 240 pieces of hand sanitizers to the Hospital

## The 2019 Performance Review for Accidents and Emergency Department

As part of the managerial requirements of the various departments, the Accident and Emergency Department organised its 2019 Performance Review on Tuesday, 10 March 2020.

The meeting led by the Head of Department, Dr. Frederick Kwarteng, presented on challenges and activities that the department took to resolve them and some achievements of the department.

Dr. Kwarteng stated some of the achievement the department chalked included procurement of additional digital and manual sphygmometers, four connectors, cuffs for red and other clinical areas, 50 bedside cabinets and outsourced cleaners.



He added that the department's Deputy Director of Nursing Services (DDNS) had been mandated to have an admission team who receive and take charge of patients that come to the department.

Expressing some challenges of the A&E in his presentation, he noted that the department continues to run short of examination consumables due to delays in payment of suppliers.

This therefore accounts for the decrease in percentage when it comes to consumables at the A&E. He appealed to

Management to ensure that Central Stores has enough consumables to prevent these challenges.

Another challenge he highlighted was that the department experiences high mortality rate as a result of terminal cases that are rushed to the place as the last resort.

He noted that the department lacks porters to transport patients. He appealed to Central Management to provide the department with 20 extra porters to aid in transfer of patients at the Emergency to other wards.

Director of Pharmacy, who led the delegation from the Central Management, hinted that Management is liaising with human resource to work on

providing more porters to the department.

In all, the department generated more income in 2019 due to the various innovative ideas put in place to increase the financial status.

In attendance at the meeting were the Director of Pharmacy, Director of Nursing Services, members of the Policy Planning Unit of Korle Bu, the Administrator of the A&E, nurses, pharmacists, medical officers and specialists from the department.

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## Views on Ghana's Covid-19 Response

around nonchalantly and engrossed in very weird myths that will have to be dealt with as soon as possible else if we start recording our cases in 100s and 1000s, we'll be in serious trouble!

Finally, in view of the trend and pattern of our epidemic curve, we should heed the advice of all the experts and lockdown! We can have a progressive lockdown by starting in Accra and Kumasi, which are becoming the epicenters in Ghana. Any announcement of this next week will also be too late because its impact will take weeks, if not months to realize.

Let's discuss with the churches and schools and accommodate some of the homeless people there, among other things. We don't have time! We are racing behind the virus and countries that have done that are paying dearly now for it! Let us not re-invent the wheel as a nation, there is abundance of data and information out there to guide an effective response as a country. Let us go out there and adopt/adapt what has worked and is

working elsewhere. This attempt at we trying to re-write the script will not help us!

However, let us remember to continue to wash our hands regularly with soap under running water or rub hands with alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Let's also ensure social distancing. Avoid unessential travels and stay home! Stop touching surfaces and your faces!

The day all of this will be over, I am hoping we would have learnt enough to improve our health system to make it more resilient to deal with any future pandemic or threat. I also hope we will be very aggressive as a country in supporting indigenous businesses so that we can be self-reliant as our forebearers envisaged.

I also hope that we would have learnt enough to plan our cities and towns to ensure easy identification and accessibility. Until then, let us use what we have to get what we want! These systems are built over time and we don't have the luxury of time now!

# PIX IN BITS



## Coronavirus

# HANDSHAKE ALTERNATIVES



The WAVE



SALUTE



ELBOW BUMP



BOW



AMASTE  
REETING



FOOT BUMP



HIP BUMP



JUST KEEP YOUR  
HANDS IN YOUR POC

**#WeShallOvercome**

