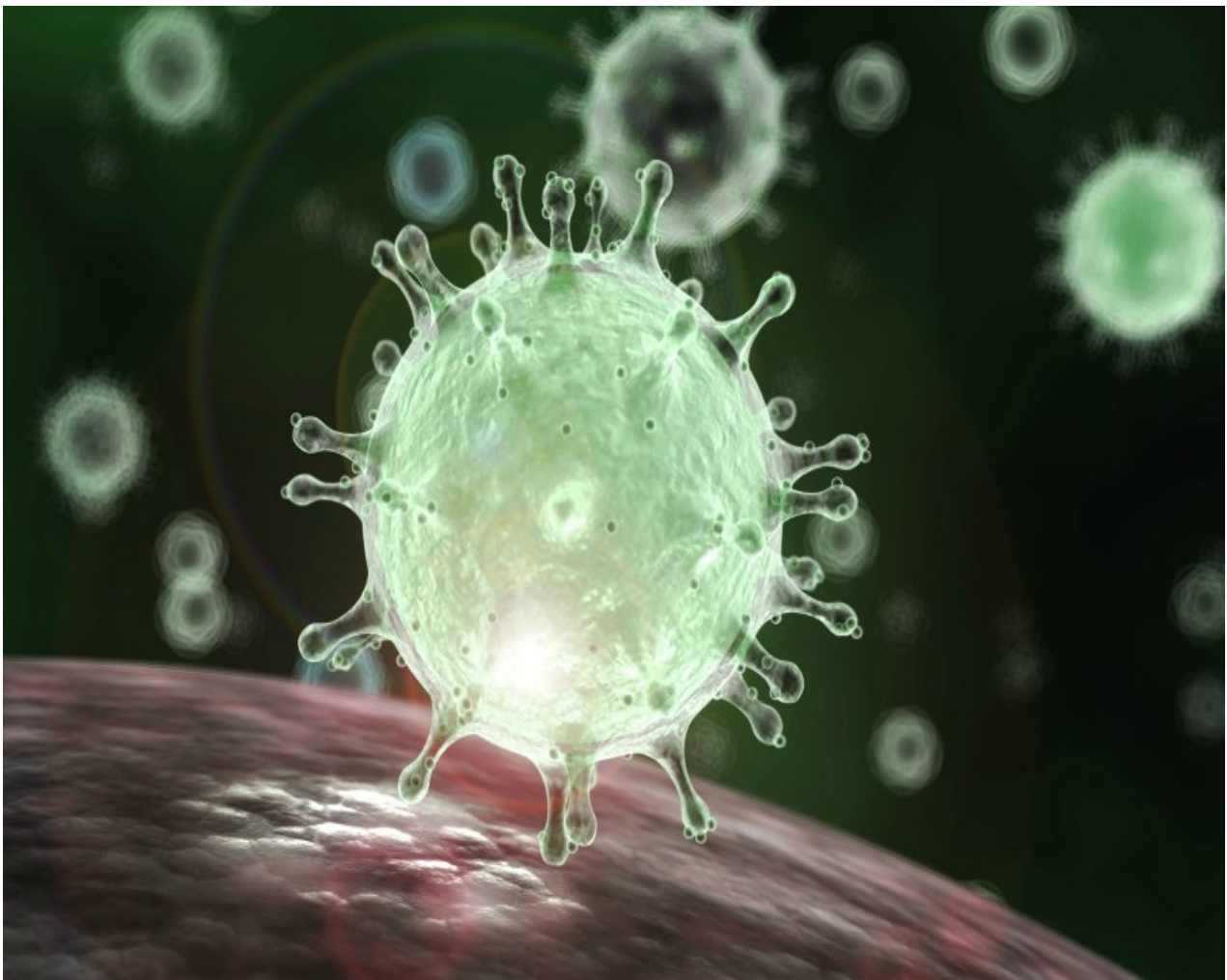


# The Virgin Islands Consortium

## Jamaica Denies Case of Coronavirus, Says it Would 'Immediately Notify' Public of Case

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KINGSTON, Jamaica, CMC – Jamaica Wednesday denied reports of a case of the coronavirus (COVID-19) assuring nationals they would be notified “immediately” if there is any positive case of the virus that has killed more than 3000 people globally.

“We understand the public concern and fear associated with the virus, given the scope of the public health threat globally. However, the spread of incorrect information about the virus is decidedly unhelpful to our response efforts,” said Health and Wellness Minister, Dr Christopher Tufton.

“We urge members of the public to contact the Ministry if and when they have concerns or wish to have anything clarified,” Tufton added.

Chief Medical Officer, Dr Jacqueline Bisasor-McKenzie, in a statement said “further, should the virus reach our shores, the Ministry will immediately notify the public”.

The Ministry said Jamaica’s response to COVID-19 is happening on two fronts: actions to minimise the risk of exposure among the local population; and actions to enhance the capacity of the public health system to manage patients in the event that there are cases.

It said those efforts include imposed travel restrictions on China, Italy, South Korea, Singapore, and Iran; the patrol of unofficial borders; sensitisation of key personnel at all air and sea ports; as well as the identification and, as appropriate, retrofitting of quarantine and isolation facilities.

The health authorities said that it has also developed the local capacity to test for the virus; assessed the readiness of public health facilities to meet the anticipated increase in demand on services; and trained health personnel.

These efforts are supported by a communications campaign to keep Jamaicans updated on the virus and its impacts and with oversight provided by the multi-sectoral National Disaster Risk Management Council led by Prime Minister Andrew Holness.

The Ministry said it is also advising Jamaicans to pay attention to the standard infection prevention and control precautions, especially as it relates to viral respiratory illnesses including avoiding close contact with persons with cold- and flu-like symptoms (coughing, sneezing etc.), especially as they transit through airports and maintaining a distance of at least two metres from any individual with respiratory symptoms.

In addition it is urging Jamaicans to frequently perform hand hygiene by washing hands thoroughly with soap and water or using a hand sanitiser if hands are not visibly soiled, especially after direct contact with ill persons or their environment.

Jamaicans are also being advised avoid touching their faces and urge persons with symptoms of acute respiratory infection practice proper cough etiquette, that is, maintain distance from others, cover coughs and sneeze with disposable tissues, discarding them immediately after use