



THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA  
**MINISTRY OF HEALTH**

# GUIDELINES FOR PREVENTION OF INFECTION WITH COVID-19 DURING BURIALS

The world is currently faced with a pandemic of COVID-19, a new virus that spreads so fast through droplet infection especially in crowded places and causes illness. Since its new, there is no immunity against it. Therefore, it is important that we practice preventive measures.

## Signs and symptoms of COVID-19 include;

- Fever
- Running Nose (flu)
- Cough
- General Weakness
- Difficulty in breathing if the patient develops pneumonia.

Burials attract huge crowds which are a potential for a spread of **COVID-19. DURING THIS PANDEMIC, VIGILS AND FUNERAL SERVICES ARE HIGHLY DISCOURAGED.** Since burials cannot be avoided, the Ministry of Health has developed guidelines to provide information to families who have lost loved ones to adhere to;

1. Limit the number of people attending burials. Only close family members may bury. In any case, the numbers should **NOT** exceed 50 people. The purpose is to avoid overcrowding and spread of infection.
2. Reduce the time for the burial ceremony to not more than 2 hours.
3. Preparation of food and drinks for mourners is **STRICTLY** prohibited as this attracts large crowds. However, the family may prepare food for themselves. Thoroughly cook meat, poultry and eggs.
4. Send information on radio to friends, relatives and in-laws regarding the deceased advising that Thanksgiving prayers will be held on a later date after the pandemic has been controlled.
5. Maintain a distance of 1 metre from each other during the burial ceremony.

6. **DO NOT** shake hands, hug and pat each other.
7. Clean and disinfect all communal places like the toilets and latrines with soap and water or disinfectant (JIK) at least three times a day.
8. Advise those with cough and flu like symptoms to avoid attending the burial.
9. Mourners **MUST** not attend any burial if they have travelled to or from any COVID-19 affected countries in the past 14 days . In any case, they should be under institutional quarantine.
10. Those who develop signs and symptoms similar to COVID-19 should calmly leave the burial place, isolate themselves and immediately call the Ministry of Health toll free lines on 0800-100-066 or 0800-203-033.
11. Provide guidelines on Do's and Don'ts to all mourners who attend the burial. These include the following;
  - i. Cover your mouth and nose with tissue or a handkerchief when coughing and sneezing. The handkerchief must be washed and ironed by you daily. In case of use of disposable tissue, ensure it is disposed of in a waste bin or a designated area where it can be burnt immediately. In this way, you protect others from any virus released through cough and sneezing.
  - ii. Wash your hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand rub immediately after using the tissue or handkerchief.
  - iii. Maintain a distance of 1 meter from anyone who is coughing or sneezing and remind them that they need to have a face mask to avoid infecting others.
  - iv. **AVOID TOUCHING YOUR EYES, NOSE AND MOUTH AT ALL TIMES.** Hands touch many surfaces including money which can be contaminated with the virus and you can transfer the virus from the surface to yourself.
  - v. **AVOID** hand-shakes, hugging and patting at all times.
  - vi. **DO NOT SPIT** in public. Identify secluded places like pit latrines or toilets for purposes of spitting and wash your hands immediately with soap and water.

**These guidelines ONLY apply to deaths NOT related to COVID-19. For COVID-19 related deaths, safe and dignified burial will be conducted by trained health workers.**

*If you suspect any person has developed signs and symptoms of COVID-19, immediately call the Ministry of Health toll free lines on **0800-100-066** or **0800-203-033** and alert them about the situation with full address of the suspected case. Avoid going to the health facilities. Ministry of Health will evacuate the suspected case..*