Papua New Guinea’s “New Normal” in the time of the COVID-19 Pandemic
What is Niupela Pasin?

Niupela Pasin

A new way of living that makes basic hygiene and safe distancing a part of our new culture – as individuals, as families, as communities.

It means adopting behaviours and actions that are consistently practiced to reduce risk of COVID-19 and other infectious diseases.

A society where people take responsibility for their own health and their families.

This booklet provides basic guidance on how Niupela Pasin can be done by everyone in Papua New Guinea.
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From the time coronavirus disease (COVID-19) was reported in Papua New Guinea on 20 March 2020, the Government and our development partners have been working hard to prepare the country in managing a large-scale pandemic. The focus of the Government throughout our management of COVID-19 has been the health and wellbeing of Papua New Guineans and ensuring we are positioned to emerge as a strong and resilient country.

Whilst we continue to respond to the pandemic, our thinking must also be directed to how we transition PNG to get back to our daily lives --- in a new normal. This means we will need to adjust measures as required and ease restrictions gradually, whilst constantly monitoring the effectiveness of these actions and the response of Papua New Guineans.

COVID-19 will be here for the long haul. We need to take responsibility for our health, our family and community.

For each citizen, this means practicing appropriate physical distances, frequently cleaning your hands, covering coughs and sneezes, avoiding crowded places and finding creative ways to keep in touch.

For schools, this means extra protection for the children and students; and for places of worship, this would entail consideration for protocols related to mass gathering and delivery of religious services.

For the private sector, this means adopting new ways of working, such as enabling staff to work from home where possible, and other measures to reduce the risk of infection in the workplace. For the businesses to operate, this would mean putting in place measures for basic hygiene facilities, considering physical distancing in the delivery of services and ensuring care and protection of staff.

For governments, this means preparing for the worst—having systems that work in every corner of the country to detect and care for people, in case of large-scale community transmission. Another important job for the government, under this “new normal” is to bring back and sustain regular health services and economic activities.

COVID-19 is unforgiving and does not discriminate. It is only by taking individual and community responsibility, working as a team across sectors, and practicing the guidance of our public health officials that we can manage the impact of this pandemic in our communities.

I understand that our people have been anxious about this outbreak and I thank each and every one of you for listening and responding. I call on everyone to continue to work together and be a champion of Niuepela Pasin in your life, in your family and in your community.

God Bless

Hon. James Marape, MP
Prime Minister, Papua New Guinea
Message from the Minister of Health and HIV/AIDS
Niupela Pasin is the “new normal way of life”. It is making basic health precaution our new culture – as individuals, as families, as communities. It is the new culture in health facilities, schools, workplaces, churches and other places of worship, business, transport, Governments and in all places of interaction.

As the Government continues to respond to COVID-19, we cannot do this alone. We need everyone’s help and cooperation. This means accepting COVID-19 as part of ‘normal living’ and adjusting our expectations and lifestyle accordingly. We need to remain committed to each other and the development of PNG. We need to make responsible decisions to protect ourselves and others from harm.

Vigilance against COVID-19 is our niupela pasin.

I also urge every Papua New Guinean to remain compassionate and support each other in this time of crisis. Let us rally behind our health workers and front liners – we need to be responding to this threat as one country.

Stay safe and remember the virus doesn’t move people, people move the virus. If we work together, we can overcome this crisis and be a stronger nation.

God Bless Papua New Guinea.

**Hon. Jelta Wong, MP**

Minister for Health and HIV/AIDS
The purpose of this Niupela Pasin guide is to provide specific actions for individuals, families, communities, schools, businesses, places of worship, work and transport on the basic precautions to protect themselves and those they love from COVID-19. As Papua New Guinea transitions to the new way of living, we want to make sure that every citizen and resident of the country shares the responsibility for our collective health and safety.

As Controller of the COVID-19 response, I thank our partners and stakeholders from the public and private sectors, World Health Organization and other UN agencies and NGOs for the collaboration and partnership in the response. I want to thank every Papua New Guinean for your cooperation, support and for doing your share.

But the work is not done yet – the threat remains and now more than ever that we need to be vigilant. We should never let our guard down. The key to this collaboration is knowing what to do and helping one another live in communities where we look after each other’s health – this entails preventing and limiting the spread of the virus and saving lives.

Let us continue to work together and take on the public health measures outlined in "Niupela Pasin".

God bless Papua New Guinea.

David Manning, MBE, DPS, QPM
Controller
Commissioner of the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary
Papua New Guinea is known for our sense of community and solidarity. Our collective work in fighting outbreaks and emergencies in the past, has shown our resilience that was made possible by working together as one country. The COVID-19 pandemic is an unprecedented public health and development emergency – it puts to test not only our health system, but also our capacity as a nation to unite and to look after each other.

This is indeed an extraordinary moment of our history. And extraordinary times require putting in place extraordinary measures that would require a “niupela pasin”. This would mean individuals, families, communities, and the whole country would adapt a new way of living, a new normal in the time of pandemic.

As we transition to the next phase of our response, we need to acknowledge that COVID-19 will change the way we behave in the family, community and society. This Guide will provide some basic precautions against COVID-19 while we can continue with our lives under this extraordinary time.

The National Department of Health will continue to work day and night to ensure we deliver our health programs and look after the health of the people. But health is everyone’s responsibility — we need to work together to build a healthy and prosperous nation that upholds human rights and our Christian and traditional values, and ensure affordable, accessible, equitable, and quality health services for all citizens.

Papua New Guinea is a strong and resilient country. I am sure we can prove our strength and resilience once again.

God Bless Papua New Guinea.

**Dr. Paison Dakulala**  
Acting-Secretary for Health
Roles of the Various Sectors in Niupela Pasin

Communities
- Protect themselves and others by adopting behaviours such as basic hygiene, distancing, and compliance to movement measures
- Adapt and provide feedback; support every part of affected communities

Schools
- Comply to measures and have systems in place to protect students, teachers and staff

Individuals and FAMILIES
- Comply to measures on mass gathering, and have systems in place to protect members

Churches
- Ensure the continuity of essential services such as the food chain, public utilities, logistics and distribution of important goods and the manufacture of medical supplies

Government
- Leads and coordinates the response across party lines to enable and empower all individuals and communities to own the response

Businesses, private sector and development partners
The threat of COVID-19 remains in Papua Guinea. Protect yourself, your family and your community.

Clean your hands often. Wash with soap and water or use an alcohol-based sanitizer.

Cough or sneeze in your bent elbow - not your hands!

Avoid touching your eyes, nose, mouth.

Limit social gatherings and time spent in crowded places.

Keep a physical distance of at least 1.5 meters between yourself and others.

Wear a face mask or face covering in all public places to protect yourself and others.

Greet each other with a smile, a nod or a simple hello – no handshakes, no fist or elbow bumps and no high-fives!

Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

If you’re sick, stay home. Don’t socialize.

If you have fever, cough, sore throat and difficulty breathing, call the COVID-19 Hotline 1-800200. If you are told to self-isolate, you must do so immediately.
Niupela Pasin
(New Normal) in Papua New Guinea

Protect yourself and family from COVID-19 at all times

LEAVING HOME

• Take a bath.

• Prepare and bring your own food to work.

• Bring your own alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

OUTSIDE YOUR HOME

• Wear a face mask or face covering in all public places to protect yourself and others.

• Greet each other with a smile, a nod or a simple hello – no handshakes!

• Maintain at least 1.5 meters between yourself and others.

• Wash your hands frequently or use an alcohol-based sanitizer or hand rub.

• Sneeze and cough into your elbow, or use a tissue and dispose into bin immediately.

• Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces such as door handles, phones, keyboards, elevator buttons, handrails.

• Reduce public gathering. Limit large in-person meetings or hold meetings via phone or over the internet.

WHEREVER YOU ARE:

• Wear a face mask or face covering in all public places to protect yourself and others.

• Maintain physical distance of at least 1.5 meters between yourself and another person – including in public transport.

• Use an alcohol-based sanitizer or hand rub after holding surfaces and objects frequently touched by people like door handles and elevator buttons.

• Sneeze and cough into your elbow, or use a tissue and dispose into bin immediately.

• Avoid touching your face, eyes, nose and mouth.

Stay vigilant. There is still a global pandemic going on. People have different experiences in the time of the pandemic. Whatever you’re feeling — it’s okay. Be supportive and kind to others. Be kind to yourself.

RETURNING HOME

• Leave your shoes outside your home.

• Take a bath and change your clothes immediately and before you hug, kiss or touch family members.

• Wash your clothes or put in laundry bins if immediate washing is not possible.
Reduce your risk of COVID-19 in Mass Gatherings

Mass gatherings should be avoided during the pandemic. If it is unavoidable, the organizer should comply with the maximum number of participants imposed by the National Control Centre for COVID-19 and health measures such as wearing of masks, physical distancing, temperature screening and hand hygiene facilities should be made available at the venue.

If you’re sick, stay home. Don’t socialize and don’t attend any mass gathering.

Greet each other with a smile, a nod or a simple hello — no handshakes, no fist or elbow bumps and no high-fives!

Wear a face mask or face covering in all public places to protect yourself and others.

Avoid talking loudly, shouting and singing as these activities can spread respiratory droplets.

Upon entry, get your temperature checked. Go home immediately if denied entry due to a temperature of more than 37.5°C.

Avoid touching your eyes, nose, mouth.

Keep a physical distance of at least 1.5 meters between yourself and others.

Clean your hands often – wash hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based sanitizer.

Cough or sneeze in your bent elbow - not your hands!

Avoid touching surfaces and areas in the venue. Wash hands or use alcohol hand rub after touching frequently touched surfaces.

Stay vigilant. Watch out for symptoms in yourself and others in the venue and report immediately.

If you get unwell at any point of the mass gathering, inform the organizer immediately.

If you have fever, cough, sore throat or difficulty breathing, call the COVID-19 Hotline 1-800200. If you are told to self-isolate you must do so immediately.
Stay healthy in the COMMUNITY

Protect yourself, your loved ones and the members of your community from COVID-19.

1. If you are sick, stay home. Do not go out.

2. If you have fever, cough, sore throat or difficulty breathing, call the COVID-19 Hotline 1-800-200. If you are told to self-isolate, you must do so immediately.

3. Keep a physical distance of at least 1.5 meters between yourself and others.

4. Clean your hands often. Wash with soap and water or use an alcohol-based sanitizer.

5. Wear a face mask or face covering in all public places to protect yourself and others.

6. If you are unwell, find someone to run errands or buy you supplies.

7. Find creative ways to socialize with neighbors – no hugging, no handshake and avoid gatherings.


9. If you can, help your community, especially the elderly, people with disability or anyone in need of assistance.

10. Be an example to your neighbors on physical distancing, personal hygiene practices, keeping your house and surrounding clean.

Stay vigilant. Look after the health and welfare of one another.

People have different experiences in the time of the pandemic. Whatever you’re feeling – it’s okay. Be supportive and kind to others. Be kind to yourself.
Protect yourself and others when in health facilities.

1. Wear a face mask.
2. Go to COVID-19 triage facility immediately if you are having difficulty of breathing.
3. Tell the truth if you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms (fever, cough, sore throat or respiratory symptoms).
4. Bring only necessary items when confined in the hospital, including medical records, laboratory results, prescriptions or records of medicines being taken.
5. Do not hesitate to ask the healthcare provider any concerns you might have about COVID-19.
6. Get sufficient prescription refills to avoid unnecessary multiple clinic visits.
7. Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water or use an alcohol-based sanitizer when you touch anything.
9. In-patients must bring their own utensils, plates, drinking glass and cups, towels and other personal items.
10. Maintain at least 1.5 meters distance from others:
   - for triage screening
   - for your out-patient consultation
   - when attending your regular check-up
   - for immunization of your child/children
   - when getting medicines at the pharmacy

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Protect yourself, your colleagues and clients in the workplace from COVID-19.

1. If you’re sick, stay home. Don’t go to work. Don’t socialise.
2. If you have fever, cough, sore throat or difficulty breathing, call the COVID-19 Hotline 1-800200. If you are told to self-isolate, you must do so immediately.
3. Maintain at least 1.5 meters between yourself, colleagues and clients.
4. Greet each other with a smile, a nod or a simple hello – no handshakes or fist bumps!
5. Clean and disinfect your workplace regularly – particularly door handles, phones, keyboards, elevator buttons, kitchens and bathrooms.
6. Wash your hands frequently with soap and water or use an alcohol-based sanitizer.
7. Sneeze and cough into your elbow, or use a tissue and dispose into bin immediately.
8. Reduce gathering in the offices. Limit large in-person meetings or hold meetings via phone or over the internet.
9. Wear a face mask or face covering in all public places to protect yourself and others.
10. If you’re concerned about your wellbeing or have underlying health conditions, work with your doctors to understand how best to stay healthy.

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Protect yourself, your friends and classmates from COVID-19.

1. If you are sick, do not go to school. Tell your parents what you feel and stay at home.
2. At the school, maintain physical distancing of at least 1.5 meters between yourself and your classmates and playmates.
3. Wear a face mask or face covering to protect yourself and others.
4. Wash your hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based sanitizer.
5. Upon entry in the school, have your temperature checked. Tell your teacher if you are not feeling well.
6. Avoid touching your face. Wash your hands with soap and water every time you touch your face.
7. Sneeze and cough into your bent elbow, or use a tissue and dispose into bin immediately.
8. Avoid sports activities that involve physical contact with other players and others.
9. If you feel scared or worried about the pandemic, talk to your teacher and parents immediately.
10. Explore home schooling options where possible.

Note to parents

If your child and any family member has fever, cough, sore throat or shortness of breath, call the COVID-19 Hotline 1-800200. If told to self-isolate, you must do so immediately.
Stay healthy in the MARKETPLACE

Protect yourself and others form COVID-19 when shopping in the market.

1. If you are sick, stay home. Delay your marketing.

2. Find someone to run errands if you need to buy something necessary on that day.

3. If you have a fever, cough, sore throat or shortness of breath, call the COVID-19 Hotline 1-800200. If you are told to self-isolate, you must do so immediately.

4. Make a list of essential items that you will buy from the market to avoid multiple runs.

5. Bring your own reusable bags and wash them immediately upon returning home.

6. Wear a face mask or face covering in the market and in all public places to protect yourself and others.

7. Comply with physical distancing requirement of at least 1.5 meters apart from other customers. Minimize talk with vendors and other customers.

8. Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer, especially after handling baskets, fresh produce, and money during payments.

9. Avoid touching surfaces and areas in the market.

10. Designate a clean area at home to sort out your market items.

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Stay healthy in SHOPPING MALLS

Protect yourself and others from COVID-19 while shopping.

1. If you are sick, stay home. Do not go to shopping malls.
2. If you have fever, cough, sore throat or difficulty breathing, call the COVID-19 Hotline 1-800-200. If you are told to self-isolate, you must do so immediately.
3. Go to malls only if it is necessary. Make a list of essential things you need to do or buy from the mall.
4. Do not enter mall if there is visible crowding. Avoid stores that do not comply with physical distancing measures.
5. Bring your own reusable bags and wash them immediately upon returning home.
6. Wear a face mask or face covering in the shopping mall and in all public places to protect yourself and others.
7. Upon entry, submit for temperature checks. Go home immediately if denied entry due to temperature of more than 37.5°C.
8. Keep at least 1.5 meters distance between you, store staff and other customers, especially at counters, cashiers and other waiting areas.
9. Minimize talk with store staffs and other clients. If cannot be avoided, keep at least 1.5 meters distance and wear a mask.
10. Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water or use an alcohol-based sanitizer, especially after holding store items and handling money and receipts.

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Stay healthy at the GROCERY STORES

Protect yourself and others from COVID-19 at grocery stores.

1. If you are sick, stay home. Delay your shopping. Find someone to run errands if you need to buy something.

2. If you have fever, cough, sore throat or difficulty breathing, call the COVID-19 Hotline 1-800200. If you are told to self-isolate, you must do so immediately.

3. Make a list of essential items you need to buy from the grocery to avoid multiple runs.

4. Bring your own reusable bags and wash them immediately upon returning home.

5. Wear a face mask or face covering at the grocery and in all public places to protect yourself and others.

6. Upon entry, submit for temperature checks. Go home immediately if denied entry due to temperature of more than 37.5°C.

7. Keep at least 1.5 meters distance between you, store staff and other customers, especially at counters, cashiers and other waiting areas. Minimize talk with store staffs and other clients.

8. Opt for contactless payment methods if possible.

9. Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water or use an alcohol-based sanitizer, especially after holding baskets, carts, freezer handles, and handling money and receipts.

10. Designate a clean area at home to sort out your shopped items.

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Protect yourself and others from COVID-19 when in the pharmacy.

1. If you are sick, stay home. Delay your shopping.

2. Find someone to run errands if you need to buy your medicines and other supplies.

3. If you have fever, cough and shortness of breath, call the COVID-19 Hotline 1-800200. If you are told to self-isolate, you must do so immediately.

4. Buy only your maintenance medicines (e.g., for diabetes, hypertension and other existing conditions). If possible, stock at least one month supply. Avoid panic buying.

5. Make a list of essential medicines to buy to avoid multiple runs.

6. Bring your own reusable bags and wash them immediately upon returning home.

7. Wear a face mask or face covering to protect yourself and others.

8. Keep at least 1.5 meters distance between you, store staff and other customers, especially at counters, cashiers and other waiting areas. Minimize talk with store staffs and other clients.

9. Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water or use an alcohol-based sanitizer, especially after holding baskets, carts; and after handling money and receipts.

10. Help a friend or a neighbor. Maximize your visit to pharmacy by also shopping for a friend or neighbor who are unable to leave homes.

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People have different experiences in the time of the pandemic. Whatever you’re feeling – it’s okay. Be supportive and kind to others. Be kind to yourself.
Protect yourself, your loved ones and others from COVID-19 when in restaurants and dining places.

1. If you are sick, stay home and dine at home. Cancel any dining out commitments.

2. If you have fever, cough, sore throat or difficulty breathing, call the COVID-19 Hotline 1-800200. If you are told to self-isolate, you must do so immediately.

3. Wear a face mask or face covering to protect yourself and others.

4. Upon entry, comply with temperature checks. Go home immediately if denied entry due to a temperature of more than 37.5°C.

5. When queuing, follow the physical distancing requirement of at least 1.5 meters apart in waiting lanes, ordering and take-out counters, cashiers and lobby premises.

6. In selecting seats, occupy marked seats when labeled to keep at least 1.5 meters distance. If no markings, take the seat in alternating positions.

7. Order your own food and drinks and avoid sharing. If not possible, use serving spoons or ladles and use own drinking glasses.

8. Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water or use alcohol-based sanitizer after holding the menu, before and after eating and handling money and receipts.

9. Transfer leftovers to be taken away into home containers.

10. Avoid dining in places where visible cleanliness and physical distancing measures are not observed.

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Stay healthy in SALONS AND BARBERSHOPS

Protect yourself and others from COVID-19 when in salons and barbershops.

1. If you are sick, stay home. Postpone your visit to salon or barbershop.
2. If you have fever, cough, sore throat or difficulty breathing, call the COVID-19 Hotline 1-800200. If you are told to self-isolate, you must do so immediately.
3. Greet your stylist or barber with a smile, wave or hello – no hugging, kissing or handshake.
4. Upon entry, submit for temperature checks. Go home immediately if denied entry due to temperature of more than 37.5°C.
5. Keep at least 1.5 meters distance from other clients and staff. Minimize talk with staff and other clients.
6. Bring your own cape if possible.
7. Wear a face mask. Limit chats with your stylist or barber to essential information about the salon or shop service.
8. Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water or use an alcohol-based sanitizer after holding salon magazines, brochures, and handling money and receipts.
9. Wash immediately products that were bought from the salon or barbershop upon reaching home.
10. Avoid going to salons and barbershops where visible cleanliness and physical distancing measures are not observed.

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Stay healthy in HOTELS

Protect yourself and others from COVID-19 when in hotels.

1. If you are sick, inform the hotel management immediately.

2. If you have fever, cough, sore throat or difficulty breathing, call the COVID-19 Hotline 1-800-200. If you are told to self-isolate, you must do so immediately. Make arrangements with the hotel for proper medical referral when needed.

3. Wear a face mask or face covering in all public places to protect yourself and others.

4. Pay attention to frequently touched surfaces and areas in your room. Wash hands or use alcohol-based sanitizer after touching:
   - Main door and cabinet door knobs
   - Safety deposit box
   - Lamp and light switches
   - Toilet and bath amenities
   - Phone handset and dial pads
   - TV and aircon remote controls
   - Iron, kettle, and refrigerator handle

5. Opt for contactless payment methods if possible.

6. Keep at least 1.5 meters distance between yourself, hotel staff and others.

7. When dining in the hotel restaurant:
   - wash hands or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer after handling the menu
   - observe 1.5 meters distancing
   - order own dish or use serving spoons and ladles for shared dishes
   - do not share drinking cups, glasses and utensils.

8. Avoid areas in the hotel where visible cleanliness and physical distancing measures are not observed.

9. Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water or use alcohol-based sanitizer after:
   - using hotel key or keycard
   - touching elevator press-pads
   - using common areas
   - handling money and receipts

10. Greet people with friendly words and smiles – no handshakes, no hugging and no other forms of physical contact.

Stay vigilant. Look after the health and welfare of one another.

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Stay healthy in PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Protect yourself, your loved ones and others from COVID-19 while riding any public land transportation.

1. If you are sick, stay home. Do not ride any public transportation.
2. If you have fever, cough, sore throat or difficulty breathing, call the COVID-19 Hotline 1-800200. If you are told to self-isolate, you must do so immediately.
3. Maintain physical distancing of at least 1.5 meters apart when riding a:
   - Taxi: maximum of three people in the cab plus driver
   - 25-seater bus: sit on alternating spaces
   - 15-seater bus: occupy only one seat per row
4. Wear a face mask or face covering to protect yourself and others.
5. Tie your long hair to avoid touching your face or other passengers when vehicle is moving.
6. Cover your cough and sneeze with flexed elbow or use tissue.
7. Sanitize your hands frequently, especially after touching surfaces such as seats, doors, windows and waiting areas.
8. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, mouth.
9. Talking loudly can spread respiratory droplets, so avoid these activities in the public places.
10. Ensure to have a travel companion if you will need special assistance – wheelchair, carrying bag or heavy items.

Stay vigilant. Look after the health and welfare of one another.

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\section{Conclusion}

In conclusion, the main aims of this study were to...
New Normal in the time of the COVID-19 Pandemic

Protect yourself, your family and community from COVID-19.

Keep at least 1.5 meters distance between you and others. Limit social gathering and time spent in crowded places.

Greet each other without touching -- no handshake, no fist or elbow bumps. Greet with the smile, bow, nod or a simple hello.

Wear a face mask or face covering in all public places to protect yourself and others.

Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

Clean hands frequently – wash with soap and water or alcohol-based sanitizer.

Cough or sneeze into your bent elbow – not your hands. Avoid touching your mouth, eyes and nose.

If you have COVID-19 symptoms such as fever, cough, sore throat or shortness of breath, call the COVID-19 toll-free hotline 1-800200 immediately.

Fighting COVID-19 is our shared responsibility. Let us all be vigilant and look after each other.