

May 25, 2020 Summer Newsletter

Will it ever be the same?

This is a question that I have been asking myself a lot these days. When I reflect on how much life has changed in the past 3 months it's a little daunting to think about. What used to be "routine" has changed. We have now created new routines.

Some of the new changes we have implemented at the Dzake Health Clinic and Peki Hospital for the most part have been received well. We have blocked all but one main entrance/exit. Here we have placed our hand washing station and a staff member is there to ensure the compliance of washing and to take temperatures before entry. 99% of people comply, but 1% will say "I washed them at home" or "I'm just dropping something off". We ask that all people entering wear a face mask. We have limited the number of loved ones to accompany the patient. If anyone is considered to be possibly contagious, we isolate them from the rest of the patients. Our waiting area's chairs have been placed several feet apart and patient beds are as far apart as possible. Disinfecting of patient areas is done regularly. This will become our routine practice. Even before this pandemic hit our world here in Peki we were always low on PPE's (personal protective equipment). Gloves were always used as sparingly as possible and masks were worn only if felt absolutely necessary. Waterless hand wash was always short in supply. Oxygen concentrators and tanks, were short if not completely out, making it necessary to decide who needed it more. We don't have isolation tents or individual rooms to separate patients.

Here in Peki we have not had a Covid-19 case yet. Praise God!! The best we could do is stabilizing the patient and transfer to a hospital in Ho or Accra for treatment. We do NOT have any testing supplies, ventilators, barely enough oxygen, so all suspected cases would be transferred.

President Akufo-Addo closed Ghana's borders to international travel in and out of the country, restricted domestic travel, closed all schools, churches, prohibited gatherings of more than 25 people and restricted domestic travel. Any non-essential travel in Accra and surrounding cities was halted. The usually packed roads in and out of Accra were now deserted. He has lifted some travel restrictions but travel is still very limited and only if deemed necessary.

Here in Peki, travel around the villages is still available, however, the amount of taxis is way down due to the fact many people are not working because of the shut down or that they are practicing social distancing and staying home as recommended. Masks are worn by most drivers and the usually packed taxis (sometimes up to 8) are now only taking 2-3 passengers.

When shopping our traders have small businesses either in very small buildings or under some kind of roofing with tables set up to display produce or other items. Most all have a hand washing area in front. Instead of entering the shop you just tell the trader what you want and they bring it out to you.

One of the biggest changes is the sounds of everyday life. Our windows are always open. So we hear everything. It used to be the sounds of children to and from school, all the churches and mosques holding services, funeral processing and gatherings, music students at the seminary practicing, soccer

games. Now it is quieter and we hear things that were drowned out by the above. Birds, people talking as they walk by, crickets, locust, chicken, goats, leaves rustling are the new sounds.

Just like the rest of the world, Ghana has been affected by this Virus and it has changed a lot of things. As of today Ghana has reported the following for Covid-19: 6,808 confirmed cases, 2,070 recovered and 32 deaths.

We will be doing things differently now and it may never be the same. Life is always full of changes sometimes we don't even realize that it has changed until we are reminded by something else.

The only thing that is never changing is our GOD. He has promised to be with us through our hardship and he will never forsake us. Just like many of you, I am praying for all those affected by this pandemic, and our every changing world.

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