

Coping with COVID-19 in hotels



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Hotels, guest houses and other accommodation establishments have the potential for being places where the COVID-19 virus can be spread. All hotels in South Africa have introduced precautions that align with other business sectors.

When staying at a hotel, guest house or other accommodation consider the following:

Checking-in:



- Wear a mask in all public spaces.



- Maintain social distancing.



- Handle your own luggage. If you need assistance, check that the porter has sanitised his hands and that social distancing is maintained.



- Check that all surfaces, including phones, remote controls, kettles, and other items in the hotel room have been disinfected.



- Wash and disinfect your hands whilst in a room. If possible, wash glasses and cups and disinfect kettle handles as an extra safeguard.

Casino Entertainment:

Casino entertainment has many high touch areas. Many hotel groups in South Africa have reduced the number of people entering the facilities by between 33% and 50% to comply with COVID-19 safety regulations. They have also placed sanitisers on gaming floors and at tables for guests to use. In addition, all chips used for gambling are cleaned by the hotel.

Additional measures include:



- A reduced number of slot machines on the gaming floor.



- Lifts that run at lower capacity so that a safe distance can be maintained.

When in casinos remember to:



- Maintain social distancing of 1.5 metres.

Some of the most often asked questions about hotel stays are:

What are hotels doing to ensure that individual hotel rooms stay as safe as possible?

Various hotels are doing what they can to reduce the number of service staff entering guests' rooms. These steps vary from hotel to hotel but can include:



- Asking arriving guests if they want their rooms serviced during their stay.



- Stopping the traditional bed turn-down service in rooms.



- For rooms which will be occupied for long periods, reducing cleaning to once every two to three days.



- Reducing the number of linen changes unless a guest requests otherwise.



- Changing check-in and check-out times so that rooms can be deep cleaned before they are occupied.



What steps are being taken to increase hygiene and ensuring social distancing at buffet breakfasts?

The traditional buffet breakfast has been adapted. Cold items (such as fruit) are now served in pre-portioned containers that are often sealed with plastic wrapping. Items like yoghurt and juices that were presented in open bowls or dispensed by beverage machines are now served in their original packaging.



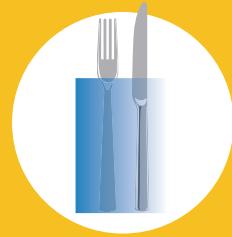
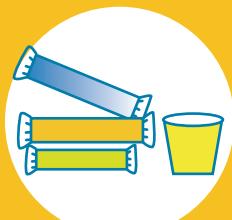
Hotel restaurants and bars are high traffic social areas. What is being done in these facilities to keep guests safe from the virus?

Generally, hotels have switched from a walk-in approach at restaurants to using reservations to control the number of people in these gathering places.

Maintaining personal distance is achieved by increasing the space between tables and closing booths where this is necessary.

In bars or cocktail areas, the number of available seats and stools have been reduced. The space between tables has been increased.

Other changes include:



- Menus that are displayed on boards.
- Disposable menus.
- Sanitising menus after each guest interaction where individual menus are still used.
- Providing single-service packages of condiments, sugars, sauces and meal accompaniments.
- Cutlery and napkins are provided in closed paper sleeves.

What the doctor has to say about hotels:

Dr Sheri Fanaroff, general practitioner in private practice says that additional things to consider when staying in a hotel should include:



- Avoiding crowded indoor spaces.



- Washing or sanitising hands regularly, especially after touching commonly touched surfaces like elevator buttons, stair rails and desktops.



- Disinfecting your room key, and any other objects, such as pens, that may have been touched by others.



- Taking your own pillow to sleep on.



- Opening the windows in the room when you arrive.



- Not being in the room when the cleaner is present.



- If you request items such as clean towels, ask for them to be left outside your door.



- Avoiding shared hotel facilities like the gym. Rather exercise outdoors if you can.



- Keeping your mask on when using public bathrooms and flushing the toilet with the lid closed. Washing your hands well afterwards and using a tissue to touch the bathroom door handle. Using a disposable towel to dry hands after washing.