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OPINION

We need to check on each other

THE SOUTH African Health Ministry has been kept on its toes since the first outbreak of coronavirus in the country earlier this month.

The government as a whole has rolled up its sleeves to ensure safety for all citizens against the virus taking lives.

We've been told to wash our hands with clean water and soap, or use alcohol-based sanitisers.

I'm a mother of a 10-month-old daughter who is experiencing her surroundings through her sense of touch. For her, everything goes through her mouth for her to decide whether to play with or throw away.

I worry about my daughter catching the virus. We are based in the Pretoria CBD and her caretaker commutes by taxi every day from Soshanguve.

She interacts with many people and touches too many objects that could be infected before coming to take care of my daughter.

More than a week ago, President Cyril Ramaphosa declared a National State of Disaster as an urgent response to the outbreak of the virus and has since put in place the necessary containment measures.

In the wake of this, I've seen increased education and awareness about the virus through media outlets and government social media pages.

I have also taken it upon myself to read up and educate myself and my daughter's caretaker about Covid-19. I recently shared my fears with her about the crippling possibility of my daughter catching the virus.

I was taken aback to learn that she had a similar fear. More so, she expressed how she feared contracting the virus.

With a lump in her throat, she told me how she also feared losing her job should the virus spread with intensity, and with a national lockdown declared.

This broke my heart, as I have observed how fond she is of my daughter. Our conversation made me realise that, as people, we need to look out more for each other.

Covid-19 has shaken the global community. It is at times like these that we need to check up on each other. While doing so, we need to also commend the tireless work that is being done by the government to curb the spread of the virus. Key to preventing the spread is frequent hand washing with clean water.

In response to this the Minister of Human Settlements, Water and Sanitation, Lindiwe Sisulu, has through her departments given a directive to prioritise water and sanitation provision in high-density public areas, informal settlements and rural areas.

The Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) has since committed to provide water tanks and standpipes in rural communities and informal settlements in order to increase access to water for residents.

In addition to this, the DWS is set to provide water tanks and sanitisers in public places, including taxi ranks, train and bus stations in the coming weeks.

As we take steps in our households to prevent infection by the coronavirus, let us also spare a thought for those in need.

Offering soap or a hand sanitiser may go a long way. As the Department of Water and Sanitation gears up to enhance water provision, let us also play our part by using water sparingly.

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