



### Grootvlei Residential Estate Homeowners Association.

Newsletter 14

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+ **Swimming pool closed.**

+ Please keep your grass short. Inspection every Monday.

+ Please sweep excess lawn clipping off your pavement/street.

+ Anybody interested in helping with the monthly newsletter please contact the office.

+ Be Careful of who you open booms for, for pedestrians' press \*9.

+ Speeding is an ongoing problem.

+ All contractors must have signed agreements before work commences on any site.

+ Report all incidents of crime no matter how trivial.

+ Refuse must be placed into your wheelie bin as papers, plastic bags & boxes are being blown against the electric fences causing many false alarms.

**We now have a web site [www.grootvleiestate.co.za](http://www.grootvleiestate.co.za)**

## Corona COVID 19 Virus

There is grave concern regarding the spread of the COVI-19 Virus and to help prevent this spread, the South African Government has declared a State of Disaster. With the following measures being put in place, these measures could change at time passes.

1. National state of disaster declared. Enabling rapid effective response system.
2. Limit contact with infected.
3. Travel ban on foreigners from high risk countries as of 18th March. Visas cancelled.
4. SA residents to avoid travel to high risk countries.
5. Travel alerts will be issued based in risk level.
6. SA citizens returning from high risk area must self-quarantine.
7. Medium risk country travel to be subjected to testing.
8. Of the 72 ports of entry in SA, 35 are to be shut down. 2 seaports are to be closed.
9. Domestic travel discouraged.
10. Gathering of more than 100 prohibited.
11. Small gathering organizer must have a plan.
12. Schools to close on Wed 18 March until after Easter holidays. July holidays will be shortened by 1 week.
13. Tertiary institutions to be consulted.
14. All businesses to ensure they intensify measures regarding hygiene control.
15. Shopping malls to ensure hygiene control measures.
16. Increase capacity of hospitals.
17. Monitoring system.
18. Mass campaign to educate.
18. Minimize physical contact.
19. Funding available to reinforce the systems introduced.
20. National Command Council setup and chaired by the President, council to meet 3 x per week.

## South African COVID 19 HOTLINE 08000 29999

**If you present with symptoms of Corona Virus, please call the official COVID 19 HOTLINE before going to your doctor, pharmacist or nurse. By calling the hotline, someone will be sent to test you where you are, which will limit the spread of the virus.**



## How to help protect yourself

**Older adults and people who have severe underlying chronic medical conditions** like heart or lung disease or diabetes seem to be at higher risk for developing more serious complications from COVID-19 illness. Please consult with your health care provider about additional steps you may be able to take to protect yourself.

### 1. Know How it Spreads



- There is currently no vaccine to prevent coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).
- **The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus.**
- The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person.
  - Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 2m).
  - Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

- These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.
- These droplets can live on objects like door handles for up to 12 hours and when you touch the handle the virus is transferred to your hand. From your hand it can be transferred to your eyes, nose or mouth by rubbing.

### 2. Take steps to protect yourself

#### 1. Clean your hands often



- **Wash your hands** often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, **use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol**. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth** with unwashed hands.

#### 2. Avoid close contact



- **Avoid close contact** with people who are sick
- Put **distance between yourself and other people** if COVID-19 is spreading in your community. This is especially important for [people who are at higher risk of getting very sick](#).
- Please ask your kids not to play in groups with other children, rather stay home.

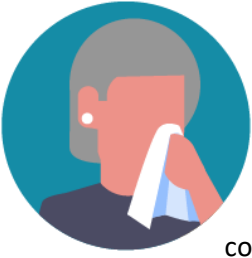
### 3. Take steps to protect others

#### 1. Stay home if you're sick



- **Stay home** if you are sick, except to get medical care.

## 2. Cover coughs and sneezes



- **Cover your mouth and nose** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow.
- **Throw used tissues** in the trash.
- Immediately **wash your hands** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, clean your hands with a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

## 3. Wear a facemask if you are sick



- **If you are sick:** You should wear a facemask when you are around other people (e.g., sharing a room or vehicle) and before you enter a healthcare provider's office. If you are not able to wear a facemask (for example, because it causes trouble breathing), then you should do your best to cover your coughs and sneezes, and people who are caring for you should wear a facemask if they enter your room. [Learn what to do if you are sick.](#)
- **If you are NOT sick:** You do not need to wear a facemask unless you are caring for someone who is sick (and they are not able to wear a facemask). Facemasks may be in short supply and they should be saved for caregivers.

## 4. Clean and disinfect



- **Clean AND disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily.** This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks.
- **If surfaces are dirty, clean them:** Use detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.

### To disinfect:

Most common EPA-registered household disinfectants will work. Use disinfectants appropriate for the surface.

### Options include:

- **Diluting your household bleach.**  
To make a bleach solution, mix:
  - 5 tablespoons (1/3rd cup) bleach per gallon of water
  - OR
  - 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water

Follow manufacturer's instructions for application and proper ventilation. Check to ensure the product is not past its expiration date. Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser. Unexpired household bleach will be effective against coronaviruses when properly diluted.

- **Alcohol solutions.**  
Ensure solution has at least 70% alcohol.

## Snakes. Rinkhals the facts

By far, the most commonly seen snake in our area is the Rinkhals or Ring neck Cobra, classified as Very Dangerous. Their mating season is between June and August when males are more aggressive, but bites are rare and fatalities unheard of. Keep your garden clear of hiding places, rats, mice, bird aviaries, etc. this will help to keep them away.



They are also found in Lesotho and western regions of Swaziland with an isolated population believed to be located in the central Zimbabwe and Mozambique border.

The Rinkhals has adapted to inhabit a variety of habitats, and can be found from the sea level to mountains at higher altitudes up to 2500 m. It is usually found in moist grassland with rainfall, where it's easier to blend into the surrounding environment. But it can also be found in swamps, marshes, moist lowlands and wetlands, is commonly found on the highveld regions avoiding bushveld regions. The Rinkhals has also adapted quite well to human urban development.

The species is also called the Rinkhals which derives from the Dutch "rink hals" meaning "ringed neck" because of the light colour crossbands usually found around their throat. They are sometimes also called ring-necked spitting cobra for the same reason.

The Rinkhals is a small to medium sized snake species, it usually reaches 90 cm to 120 cm in length, but can reach up to 1,5 m. They are bulkier when compared to other similar sized cobra species. Their head is short and pointed, with fairly large, black

eyes.

The Rinkhals coloration varies throughout its range, with some individuals being mostly black or greyish. They do have a characteristic darker belly usually dark brown or black with 1 to 4 white, pale cream or yellow coloured crossbands on the throat area. Their scales are strongly keeled, yet another distinction from true cobras.

As usual the Rinkhals is regarded as an aggressive snake, when in fact like most snakes they will do virtually anything to avoid a confrontation. In true cobra style the Rinkhals will rear up and spread a hood and hiss loudly. They will also spit venom with extreme accuracy up to 2 meters of distance, usually aiming to the face or eyes.

Sometimes they will convincingly feign death, and sometimes people get bitten when picking up what seems to be a dead snake, not a good idea. The Rinkhals is usually a nocturnal species, but sometimes it may be observed basking in the sun during the day.

### Venom / Bite

The Rinkhals venom is mostly composed of strong neurotoxins, but it has also as a small amount of cytotoxins. When compared to the venom of other African elapids, it's much more fluid with less viscosity, making it easier to spit.

Their venom glands have a capacity of 80 to 120 mg. The estimated lethal dose is for

humans is around 50 to 60 mg and the average yield per bite is around 100 mg.

Their venom effects are not as severe as those of other cobra species, and usually include pain, bruising and swelling in bite area, nausea, vomiting, drowsiness, vertigo and abdominal pain.

However, if a bite occurs on an extremity like a finger there is



a real danger of amputation, because of the bite's very severe local effects. Other neurological effects may also manifest including general paralysis and difficulty breathing, which could eventually lead to death. But since the Rinkhals tends to spit rather than injecting venom there are actually few bites to humans. They are quite capable of aiming and usually spit their venom at the face or eyes, and if the eyes are hit the victim

may experience an excruciating pain, blurred vision and even permanent blindness, if the venom is not washed off quickly. It's also uncertain that the Rinkhals ever caused a human fatality, but any bite from one, is potentially lethal and should be treated seriously. Dogs however get bitten quite often when they attack these snakes. These snakes have fixed frontal fangs located on the

upper jaw, with a venom canal running through each fang. The fangs are specially modified for spitting because the discharge hole is facing to the front at a 90-degree angle not down. This distinctive feature allows them to spit or spray venom at an attacker, particularly targeting the eyes. But unlike true spitting cobras like the Mozambique spitting cobra, that can spit venom in a horizontal position, the Rinkhals has to rear up to spit venom.

### Diet / Feeding

The Rinkhals has a fairly diverse diet, feeding on almost anything it can catch and kill. They prey mostly on rodents like rats and mice and frogs or toads, but will take small mammals, amphibians, birds and bird's eggs, lizards and even other snakes. Juvenile snakes feed primarily on lizard and toad eggs.

### Reproduction

The Rinkhals is quite unique amongst African cobra species since unlike other true cobras it is ovoviviparous. They don't lay eggs these are live-bearing snakes. The mating season occurs from June until August with the young snakes being born usually from late December up to late February or early March. During the mating season the males behave more aggressively, and they will fight for dominance with rival males. They go as far as sometimes even biting the female during copulation which can be fatal for the female. The Rinkhals gestation period lasts around 5 to 6 months during which the embryos develop inside of the female's body. They are kept within a clear membrane without an egg-shell, until these baby snakes are ready to be born. During gestation the female does not eat particularly in the latter half of this period, because of her bulk. When the babies are fully developed, the female lays the embryos usually in an abandoned burrow. Then the hatchlings use a sharp egg tooth located on the snout to break off the protective membrane and wander off to fend for themselves. They receive no parental care. The



Rinkhals gives birth around 20 to 35 young snakes, but as many as 65 hatchlings have been recorded in a single clutch. The young snakes are almost exact replicas an adult Rinkhals, although much smaller, being only about 15 to 20 cm in length. They are usually grey-toned with characteristic white bands around the throat being usually very visible at birth, they become black when they reach about 1 meter in length.



## Rodents. Rats & Mice

Rats are some of the smartest animals on the planet, but they are also one of the biggest disease-spreading pests around. That's why so many people wonder how to get rid of rats in a natural, safe way, and that curiosity has spiked recently. It turns out, rats don't just carry filth and annoying disease — they can be lethal. In fact, recently in

New York City three people became severely ill, (one of them even died), due to the rare disease leptospirosis. According to the NYC Health Department: "Leptospirosis is a bacterial infection that is most commonly spread by contact with rat urine and is very rarely spread from person to person."

However rare, the disease can be lethal, evidenced by the New York death. And that's not the only disease rats spread. Thankfully, if you're wondering how to get rid of rats, there are natural, effective ways to do so, without harmful rat poi

**Our Chairman of GREHOA Nico Nel, has resigned with immediate effect.**

**Thank you to all those residents who, by complying with our simple rules, are keeping Grootvlei Residential Estate as one of the most neat, tranquil and safe areas to live in.**

**Let's all stand together and keep it tranquil and safe, noncompliance leads to lawlessness which leads to total destruction of everything that made us purchase in this estate.**

**Non-compliance levies are our last resort, we do not like issuing fines, but we all signed agreement of our rules and regulations, and are they are legally binding on all of us.**

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