

Dear Friends,

The World Health Organization (WHO) and Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) continues to monitor closely the emergence of the SARS-CoV-2 virus and the disease it causes, named “coronavirus disease 2019” (COVID-19). At this time, no one knows how severe this outbreak will be. Given this uncertainty, we are taking this opportunity to inform you of the best practices to protect your health and the community around you, as recommended by the World Health Organization, taken from their website at:

[World Health Organization - Coronavirus update](#)

Basic protective measures against the new coronavirus that must be practiced:

Wash your hands frequently

- Regularly and thoroughly clean your hands with soap and water, for at least 20 seconds especially after using the restroom and before eating. Use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol in between hand washings.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces.

Why? Washing your hands with soap and water or using alcohol-based hand rub kills viruses that may be on your hands.

Maintain social distancing

Maintain at least 1 meter (3 feet) distance between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing.

Why? When someone coughs or sneezes they spray small liquid droplets from their nose or mouth which may contain virus. If you are too close, you can breathe in the droplets, including the COVID-19 virus if the person coughing has the disease.

Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth

Why? Hands touch many surfaces and can pick up viruses. Once contaminated, hands can transfer the virus to your eyes, nose or mouth. From there, the virus can enter your body and can make you sick.

Practice respiratory hygiene

Make sure you, and the people around you, follow good respiratory hygiene. This means covering your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze. Then dispose of the used tissue immediately.

Why? Droplets spread virus. By following good respiratory hygiene you protect the people around you from viruses such as cold, flu and COVID-19.

If you have fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical care early

Stay home if you feel unwell. If you have a fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical attention and call in advance. Follow the directions of your local health authority.

Why? National and local authorities will have the most up to date information on the situation in your area. Calling in advance will allow your health care provider to quickly direct you to the right health facility. This will also protect you and help prevent spread of viruses and other infections.

Stay informed and follow advice given by your healthcare provider

Stay informed on the latest developments about COVID-19. Follow advice given by your healthcare provider, your national and local public health authority or your employer on how to protect yourself and others from COVID-19.

Why? National and local authorities will have the most up to date information on whether COVID-19 is spreading in your area. They are best placed to advise on what people in your area should be doing to protect themselves.

Protection measures for persons who are in or have recently visited (past 14 days) areas where COVID-19 is spreading

- Follow the guidance outlined above.
- Stay at home if you begin to feel unwell, even with mild symptoms such as headache and slight runny nose, until you recover.

Why? Avoiding contact with others and visits to medical facilities will allow these facilities to operate more effectively and help protect you and others from possible COVID-19 and other viruses.

- If you develop fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical advice promptly as this may be due to a respiratory infection or other serious condition. Call in advance and tell your provider of any recent travel or contact with travelers.

Why? Calling in advance will allow your health care provider to quickly direct you to the right health facility. This will also help to prevent possible spread of COVID-19 and other viruses.

How to cope with stress during 2019-nCoV outbreak

- It is normal to feel sad, stressed, confused, scared or angry during a crisis.
- Talking to people you trust can help. Contact your friends and family.
- If you must stay at home, maintain a healthy lifestyle - including proper diet, sleep, exercise and social contacts with loved ones at home and by email and phone with other family and friends.
- Don't use smoking, alcohol or other drugs to deal with your emotions.
- If you feel overwhelmed, talk to a health worker or counsellor. Have a plan, where to go to and how to seek help for physical and mental health needs if required.
- Get the facts. Gather information that will help you accurately determine your risk so that you can take reasonable precautions. Find a credible source you can trust such as WHO website or, a local or state public health agency.

- Limit worry and agitation by lessening the time you and your family spend watching or listening to media coverage that you perceive as upsetting.
- Draw on skills you have used in the past that have helped you to manage previous life's adversities and use those skills to help you manage your emotions during the challenging time of this outbreak.

Helping children cope with stress during the 2019-nCoV outbreak

- Children may respond to stress in different ways such as being more clingy, anxious, withdrawing, angry or agitated, bedwetting etc.
- Respond to your child's reactions in a supportive way, listen to their concerns and give them extra love and attention.
- Children need adults' love and attention during difficult times. Give them extra time and attention.
- Remember to listen to your children, speak kindly and reassure them.
- If possible, make opportunities for the child to play and relax.
- Try and keep children close to their parents and family and avoid separating children and their caregivers to the extent possible. If separation occurs (e.g. hospitalization) ensure regular contact (e.g. via phone) and re-assurance.
- Keep to regular routines and schedules as much as possible, or help create new ones in a new environment, including school/learning as well as time for safely playing and relaxing.
- Provide facts about what has happened, explain what is going on now and give them clear information about how to reduce their risk of being infected by the disease in words that they can understand depending on their age.
- This also includes providing information about what could happen in a re-assuring way (e.g. a family member and/or the child may start not feeling well and may have to go to the hospital for some time so doctors can help them feel better).

Stay healthy while Traveling

- Avoid travel if you have a fever and cough
- If you have a fever, cough and difficulty breathing seek medical care early and share previous travel history with your health care provider
- Avoid close contact with people suffering from a fever and cough
- Frequently clean hands by using an alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water
- Avoid touching eyes, nose or mouth
- When coughing and sneezing cover mouth and nose with flexed elbow or tissue. Throw tissue away immediately and wash hands

- If you choose to wear a face mask, be sure to cover your mouth and nose – avoid touching mask once it is on.
 - Immediately discard single-use mask after each use and wash your hands after removing the mask.
 - If you become sick while traveling, inform crew and seek medical care early. Eat only well-cooked food
 - Avoid spitting in public
 - Avoid close contact and/or travel with animals that are sick.
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