

COVID-19: The New Normal



1 We are experiencing a strange, new health challenge. With the spread of a coronavirus strain, called COVID-19, our daily lives are changing.

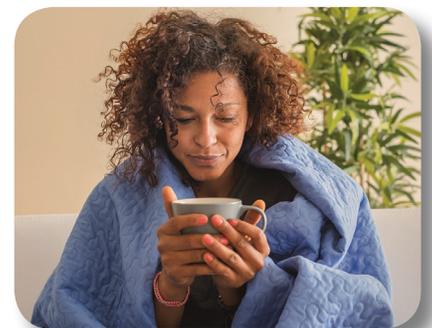
Because of these unusual times, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are requesting that everyone use some new actions to slow down the spread of the virus.

Social Distancing. Health officials are strongly recommending something called “**social distancing**,” which means that people should stay 6 feet away from each other. This is to help avoid potential infection. Because testing has been slow in the U.S., keeping your distance from others is the best way to decrease the spread of this disease. Without widespread testing, people could be carrying the virus and not know it. This is why “**social distancing**” is critical.

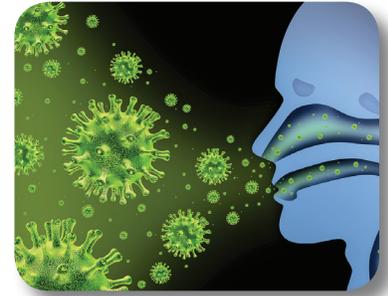
Practice protective hygiene. This means washing your hands often for at least 20 seconds (if soap/water is not available, use hand sanitizer). Use tissues whenever you cough and/or sneeze (or cough and/or sneeze into your sleeve) to prevent the spread of droplets.

Important New Habits. Avoid touching your face (nose, mouth, and eyes) as this can lead to infection. Make a greater effort to stay healthy by eating and sleeping well. Develop new habits that you enjoy like yoga or walking, reading, painting, or listening to music to help time pass without being around other people. Stay connected with others through the phone and Internet.

Symptoms. Know the symptoms of COVID-19. While the illness has similarities to a cold or the common flu, this virus is more dangerous. If you have a cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, or fever, monitor your symptoms closely. Many people will experience minor discomfort from COVID-19, however, if symptoms worsen, call your doctor’s office for medical advice.



Catching the Virus. The transmission of the virus is primarily through respiratory droplets from an infected person (when they cough or sneeze). But be aware that some traces of the virus could be on surfaces. Clean hard surfaces with disinfectant spray or wipes to kill any potential viruses.



If sick, stay home. If you are feeling sick, it is important to limit your exposure to others. If you have recently traveled or been exposed to someone who is sick, stay home until you are sure you have no infection. The CDC recommends 14 days to limit the possible spread of the virus.

Plan for all possibilities. No one knows what will happen with COVID-19, so it is good to plan for all possible situations rather than panic. Make sure you, your family and friends, and your health care providers discuss a plan of action. Consider how you will manage if you get ill. Have extra food and supplies on hand. Have your medications filled on time. Talk with your health providers if you have any concerns.

Isolation and Stress. As we all face COVID-19, it is important to understand that this is a traumatic event being felt on a global level. If you feel stressed, your feelings are NORMAL. You are not alone. **Don't panic. Be patient and have hope.**



REMEMBER: The best way to prevent an illness is to avoid being exposed. There is currently no vaccine to prevent coronavirus disease (or COVID-19).



Check out the CDC website. It has a special tab devoted to coronavirus developments and information.



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