

COVID-19

YOUR QUESTIONS, ANSWERED!

ABOUT THE VIRUS

Do all symptoms of the virus appear together or separately?

Symptoms of the virus vary from case to case. Most patients experience a fever and a dry cough, but some cases show no symptoms at all. If you experience fever, a cough, or difficulty breathing, you should call a healthcare provider to determine the best steps for isolation and/or treatment.

How long does it take for symptoms of COVID-19 to show in an infected person?

Symptoms of the disease may appear anywhere between two to 14 days after exposure. Not every infected person demonstrates symptoms at all.

Does everyone that gets the virus require hospital care in order to survive? Who is at most risk of needing critical medical attention if they contract the virus?

Most people who are infected with COVID-19 will not become ill enough to require hospitalization or specialized healthcare. Individuals with advanced age, diabetes, heart disease, respiratory conditions, or cancer are at a greater risk of developing more severe symptoms from the illness. Those with these co-morbidities should practice extra caution to avoid becoming infected.

TRANSMISSION

I hear the virus lasts for hours in air, is it true? And how long does it last on surfaces?

Though the virus can be transmitted via close proximity (within the WHO-recommended one-meter) to an infected person who coughs and sneezes, current research has not found that the virus survives in the air in most normal conditions. Research is ongoing to determine the risk of the virus surviving in the air, but this is not a significant risk if you practice proper social distancing. The virus can remain in droplets on other surfaces for up to several days. For these reasons, you should practice social distancing to avoid cough and sneeze droplets, wash hands for at least 40 seconds, and regularly clean often-used surfaces.

Can the virus live and spread in warm temperatures?

Warm temperatures have NOT been found to prevent the spread of the virus. The virus can survive outside the body in all temperatures regularly experienced in places where humans live around the world (0-35 degrees Celsius)

Can you catch COVID-19 from contact with bodies of those who have died from the illness?

To date, there is no evidence of persons having become infected from exposure to the bodies of persons who died from COVID-19. Nevertheless, family members are advised to reduce their exposure. They should not touch or kiss the body and should wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water following the viewing. Physical distancing measures should be strictly applied. Children, adults aged above 60 years, and immunosuppressed persons should not directly interact with the body.

PREVENTION

How should we talk to children about preventative practices?

Children are fast learners, especially when it comes to being taught consistent habits! Educators and the WHO suggest that parents make handwashing a habit before and after eating, after using the bathroom, and upon returning home. Some parents are using small toys to extend the handwashing time – and make it a form of play! They ask their kids to “wash” a small toy. While the children are washing the toy, their hands are getting cleaner.

How can we effectively withdraw cash from ATMs and carry pocket change without exposing ourselves to infection from infected surfaces?

Remember to use proper hand washing practices and to not touch your nose, mouth, or eyes, especially after handling frequently touched objects like money. COVID-19 can only be transmitted by droplets entering the nose, eyes, or mouth – not by being carried in a pocket! If hand hygiene is adhered to, you will not be at risk of infection.

RESPONSE

How long should one wear the same face mask?

Face masks and other personal protective equipment are for one use only. They can last for hours if they are not removed, but if you touch or remove your facemask to eat or to otherwise improve your personal comfort, this facemask should be discarded and replaced. The WHO recommends that only medical care providers and patients infected with the virus use personal protective equipment like facemasks. Others should use handwashing, social distancing, and regular cleaning of surfaces to prevent infection.

How are we dealing with conducting home visits while exercising social distancing?

You can still practice the WHO-recommended one meter of social distancing while conducting home visits! Communicate to your customers about this practice and the need to maintain personal space while visiting their home. Remember to not touch your eyes, nose or mouth and to wash your hands using the proper techniques.

How can we take care of a victim of coronavirus at home?

Most patients who contract coronavirus are able to remain at home through the course of the illness and will not require hospitalization or other medical care. This decision requires clinical judgment and should be informed by an assessment of the safety of the patient’s home environment. If you live with a loved one who becomes ill with coronavirus, you should maintain proper social distancing, be extra careful of handwashing practices, and regularly clean surfaces. You and your sick loved one must wear medical masks, and practice social distancing to avoid spreading the virus to others. If you can, contact healthcare providers using the phone or other means for the duration of the home care period.

I have heard there is research that various existing medications, including certain anti-malarial medications, are able to cure or prevent coronavirus. Should I purchase these medications to protect myself?

Though various medications are being tested by researchers to fight this pandemic, NO drugs or other chemicals have been approved as safe to prevent or cure coronavirus. Some medications and chemicals can cause dangerous side effects that lead to disability or death, and they should NOT be taken until the WHO further establishes the safety and effectiveness of the drugs for COVID-19.

