

Preventing coronavirus: Things you can do now

According to the Centers for Disease Control, the best way to prevent illness, including the current coronavirus disease (COVID 19) is to avoid being exposed to the virus. Here are some practical things you can do to avoid getting sick and not get others sick (all are recommended by the CDC).

Practice social distancing. It is critical that everyone follow the guidelines set forth by the CDC, our state government local cities and towns and the university. These guidelines are set into place to 1) keep you safe and avoid getting COVID-19, 2) keep you from unintentionally getting others sick especially vulnerable people like older adults and those with health conditions and 3) slow the spread of the COVID-19, thus allowing hospitals to have the ability to treat everyone who needs help.

Avoid close contact with people who are sick. Evidence so far indicates that the COVID-19 virus is spread through droplets not in the open air. It is best to not be around sick people at all. It is also best to stay at least six feet from everyone, since it is possible to have COVID-19 and only have mild or even no symptoms. For instructions on what to do if someone in your home has COVID-19 go [here](#).

Avoid touching your eyes nose and mouth. This can be a tricky habit to break. For tips on how to stop touching your face go [here](#).

Stay home when you are sick. If you begin to feel sick while at work, go home as soon as possible.

Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue. Immediately throw the tissue into the trash and then wash your hands. You can also cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve. Do not cough or sneeze into your hands.

Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using disinfecting household spray or wipe. For specific instructions on cleaning hard surfaces, clothing etc. go [here](#).

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Hand washing

Regular and proper hand washing is one of the most important things you can do to avoid any type of cold, flu or coronavirus. Here's the most effective way to do it.

WHEN: Wash your hands often, especially:

- After going to the bathroom.
- Before you eat.
- After blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing.
- After touching items used by someone who is sick or touching someone who is sick.
- Before touching your face eyes or mouth.
- If your hands are visibly dirty.

HOW to wash your hands:

- Use soap and water.
- Wet your hands first with warm or cold water.
- Lather your hands by rubbing them together with soaps.
- Wash for at least 20 seconds (about the time it takes to sing "Happy Birthday" twice).
- Rub the suds all over your hands (front and back), fingers, between fingers, under nails.
- Rinse completely under running water.
- Dry completely with a clean towel or air dry them.

What about hand sanitizer? If soap and water are not available, you can use hand sanitizer that has at least 60% alcohol. Check the product label to be sure there is enough alcohol in it. Here is how to use it effectively:

- Use enough product (the label will tell you how much you need).
- Rub the product all over your hands, fingers, between fingers and under nails.
- Rub until all the surfaces of your hands are dry. This will be about 20 seconds.

Can't find hand sanitizer? No worries – use soap and water. This is just as, if not more, effective.

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For more info on hand washing go [here](#). This CDC site has written information and a helpful video. For a hand washing poster go [here](#).

The role of face masks

NO need if you are healthy: Many people wonder if wearing face masks in public will protect them from coronavirus. The CDC does not recommend the routine use of respirators or face masks in public. The disease is most often spread person to person when the people are within six feet of each other. Following the guidelines in the article above will be much more effective.

You should only wear a face mask if a healthcare professional recommends it. For instance, people who have COVID 19 and are showing symptoms may be instructed to wear face masks. Healthcare workers in close contact with sick people may also wear them. For more information about face masks go [here](#).

Get the real facts

For more information about coronavirus in general go to [the CDC's site](#).