

Coronavirus

Ways to avoid being infected

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I'm worried about the new virus beginning to make its way around the world. Can we avoid being infected?

In December 2019, a new and aggressive form of respiratory infection was discovered in Wuhan, Hubei province, China, and recently has been named COVID-19. The causative virus is a coronavirus named severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) and of the same family as the virus that caused the SARS epidemic in 2002-2003. By March 11, it was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization.

Transmission occurs through droplets spread when infected people cough or sneeze, and it gains access to the body through the respiratory tract (lungs). The symptoms include fever, cough, muscle pain, shortness of breath, and fatigue; some patients may have diarrhea, and others very mild to no symptoms at all. It may present the same way as does influenza. Progression of the disease may lead to severe pneumonia, with lung-tissue destruction and death. It has rapidly spread outside China, and there's no way of predicting how severe this outbreak may yet become. Despite the measures many countries have implemented to contain the spread, including quarantine, the disease has become a pandemic.

The infectious period is between two and 14 days. The time period for quarantine (isolation from others) is two weeks.

No vaccine is yet available, and treatment is symptomatic and supportive therapy. For the sickest, breathing support may be required to sustain and save life. No known COVID-19 antiviral medications are presently available. The production of a vaccine—although a priority—may take up to a year to prove efficacy and safety. It's difficult to accurately assess the death rate from COVID-19, as not every case has been reported, but it's presently estimated conservatively at over 3 percent (statistics vary and data is changing hour by hour).

How do we stay healthy?

Please practice the standard universal precautions:

- Clean hands frequently with soap and water or minimum 60 % alcohol-based hand rub.
- Follow the coughing and sneezing etiquette: sneeze into the folded arm; cover your cough. Take masks with you when traveling. In situations where people persist in coughing and sneezing in a confined space and you cannot leave, you may wish to use a mask. Remember that the use of a mask has been shown to prevent those who have infection from spreading the virus but is not protective generally.
- Maintain a social distance—at least one meter (three feet)—between yourself and other people. Avoid close contact with those who are coughing or sniffing.
- Avoid touching/rubbing your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- If you develop a cough and experience changes in your breathing, seek medical help early and share your travel history with health-care providers.
- Avoid open markets and direct contact with animals/animal products.
- Follow careful food-safety practices (well-cooked food, clean produce, pasteurized milk, etc.).
- Get the flu vaccine.
- Avoid travel to endemic areas; check out the WHO and CDC travel advisory regarding travel restrictions.*
- Respect and follow the health directives from your local and national jurisdictions
- If you think you've been exposed by travel or contact with an affected individual, seek advice from your primary-care physician.

We talk about immunity boosting and well-being especially at a time like this. There is no better time or opportunity for us to *live* the Adventist Health Message – eat healthy, **balanced** vegetarian diets rich in fresh fruits, vegetables, grains legumes, nuts filled with antioxidants and vitamins in the “packages” (minimally processed) God provided. Exercise regularly, daily! Drink

lots of fresh, clean water (avoid the sugary drinks). Enjoy careful sunlight exposure and take plenty of fresh air while walking, cycling or working in the garden! Practice temperance in all things, and avoid all things harmful. Remember to rest – the special rest from our work and works on the Sabbath, and intentionally make the time to sleep at least 7-8 hours each night allowing your brain and your body to refresh and reboot. Maintain integrity, enjoy a sense of humor and cherish and cultivate positive relationships with your family and in your community – you will be more healthy for so doing...And most importantly, trust God, dear friend!

This is not a time for panic. It is a time for a calm and steady trust in the Lord we love and serve, and also to focus on how best we can serve. We can move forward together in this interesting and challenging time. I am reminded that “We have nothing to fear for the future except we forget how God has led us in the past and His teachings.” We have an opportunity to bear witness to the faith that is within us reflecting hope, and demonstrating stability through the assurance that “...God will never leave us nor forsake us.”

Remember: “God desires His children to have intelligence and knowledge, that with unmistakable clearness and power His glory may be revealed in our world.” Ellen White, MH p149
Maranatha!

* www.who.int/ith/2020-24-01-outbreak-of-Pneumonia-caused-by-new-coronavirus/en/

For more information:

- **Novel coronavirus (COVID-19)**—<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>
- **Advice for the public**—<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>
- **Travel advice**—<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/travel-advice>
- **Risk communication and community engagement**—[https://www.who.int/publications-detail/risk-communication-and-community-engagement-readiness-and-initial-response-for-novel-coronaviruses-\(-ncov\)](https://www.who.int/publications-detail/risk-communication-and-community-engagement-readiness-and-initial-response-for-novel-coronaviruses-(-ncov))
- **Proper handwashing technique**—https://www.who.int/gpsc/clean_hands_protection/en/
- **Science behind handwashing techniques**—<https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/show-me-the-science-handwashing.html>