COVID-19 Facts: How to Protect Yourself and Your Family

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News about the novel coronavirus, otherwise known as COVID-19, is everywhere. The gush of information can be overwhelming and anxiety-provoking. We've researched COVID-19 facts to help you deal with the crisis.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has provided information that you can use today to protect you and your family. Below are take-aways to help you prepare for a possible COVID-19 outbreak in your community, along with links to the original CDC guidance for more details:

1. Make a household plan of action.

- Talk with the people who need to be included in your plan of action.
- Plan ways to care for those who might be at greater risk for the COVID-19 virus, such as people over age 60, those with chronic health issues like diabetes or heart disease, or reduced immunity.
- Introduce yourself to your neighbors so that you can watch out for each other.
- Identify community aid organizations, such as your county's health department. Many health departments now have COVID-19 webpages with phone numbers of whom to contact if you suspect you or a family member have the virus.
- Create an emergency contacts list with names, phone numbers and email addresses of family members and friends, and then share it with each other.

READ:
[CDC COVID-19 Website](#)
[Get Your Home Ready](#)
[What to Do if a COVID-19 Outbreak Occurs in Your Community](#)
[If You are at Higher Risk](#)

2. Prepare your home.

- Remind everyone in your household of the importance of practicing everyday actions that can help prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses:
- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after using the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. (Always wash your hands with soap and water first if they dirty before applying hand sanitizer).

COVID-19 Fact: The CDC recommends six feet of distance between people.

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick. Stay home if you are sick, except to get medical care.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue, and dispose of the tissue in a lined wastebasket.
- Every day clean your tables, countertops, light switches, doorknobs and cabinet handles using a regular household detergent and water, following manufacturer's instructions.

READ:
List of Coronavirus-fighting Products

3. Get essential medications and other supplies.

- Ask your healthcare provider about getting extra necessary medications to have on hand in case there is an outbreak of COVID-19 in your community and you need to stay home for a prolonged period of time.
- Consider using mail-order for medications to avoid trips to the pharmacy.
- Get over-the-counter medicines and medical supplies (tissues, etc.) to treat fever and other symptoms. (Most people will be able to recover from COVID-19 at home).
- Have enough groceries on hand to prepare to stay at home during a two-week isolation (or a longer isolation period if recommended by your physician or local health department).

READ:
Have Supplies on Hand

4. Plan for potential changes at your workplace.

- If your HR department hasn't already issued guidance, contact them to ask about your employer's emergency operations
- Ask about sick-leave policies and telework options if you get sick or need to stay home to care for sick household members.

5. Be prepared if your child's school or childcare facility is temporarily dismissed.

- Learn about the emergency operations plan at your child's school or childcare facility.
- Many local public health officials are recommending temporary school dismissals to help slow the spread of illness.
- School authorities also may decide to dismiss a school if too many students or staff are absent. Understand the plan for continuing education and social services (such as student meal programs) during school dismissals.

- If your child attends a college or university, encourage them to learn about the school's plan for a COVID-19 outbreak.
- If your children are in the care of others, urge caregivers to watch for COVID-19 symptoms.

READ:
CDC's Guidance on Temporary School Dismissals
Scholastic: Free Learning at Home Resources During Coronavirus Crisis

6. What to do if you get sick.

- Stay home.
- If a member of your household is sick, stay home from school and work to avoid spreading COVID-19 to others.
- If possible, use a separate bedroom and bathroom for a sick household member.
- Avoid sharing personal items like food and drinks.
- Provide the sick household member with clean disposable facemasks to wear at home, if available, to help prevent spreading COVID-19 to others.
- If you live alone and become sick during a COVID-19 outbreak, you may need help. If you have a chronic medical condition and live alone, ask family, friends and health care providers to check on you during an outbreak.
- Stay in touch with family and friends with chronic medical conditions. Use phone calls, text and email.

READ:
Coronavirus Symptoms
Preventing the Spread of Coronavirus in Homes and Residential Communities

7. Take care of your loved ones' emotional health.

The coronavirus pandemic is stressful for adults and children. Talk with your children about the outbreak, try to stay calm, and reassure them that they are safe.

READ:
Helping Children Cope with Emergencies

MORE RESOURCES
COVID-19 Update, "A Message From Concerned Physicians"

Visit HealthDiscovery.org for related topics.