The Coronavirus Pandemic: Frequently Asked Questions

What can people do to avoid contracting or spreading the virus?

Different health organizations and websites are putting out basic guidance for proper hygiene, "social distancing," and recommendations on when to seek professional medical care. The points below from the World Health Organization website provide very good guidance. But since the WHO issued them, understanding of the disease has developed, and most public health experts now say that social distancing should be about six feet (not three feet as WHO said); that this distance should be maintained regardless of whether you or others are coughing or sneezing; that handshaking is a significant way in which the virus is transmitted; and that *thorough* handwashing is more effective than hand sanitizer (WHO treats them as equally effective).

Finally, we want to emphasize that if people notice any relevant symptoms, they should contact medical professionals quickly.

• Wash your hands frequently

Regularly and thoroughly clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or wash them with soap and water.

Why? Washing your hands with soap and water or using alcohol-based hand rub kills viruses that may be on your hands.

• Maintain social distancing

Maintain at least 2 metre (6 feet) distance between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing.

Why? When someone coughs or sneezes, they spray small liquid droplets from their nose or mouth which may contain virus. If you are too close, you can breathe in the droplets, including the COVID-19 virus if the person coughing has the disease.

• Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth

Why? Hands touch many surfaces and can pick up viruses. Once contaminated, hands can transfer the virus to your eyes, nose, or mouth. From there, the virus can enter your body and can make you sick.

• Practice respiratory hygiene

Make sure you, and the people around you, follow good respiratory hygiene. This means covering your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze. Then dispose of the used tissue immediately.

Why? Droplets spread virus. By following good respiratory hygiene, you protect the people around you from viruses such as cold, flu and COVID-19.

• If you have fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical care early

Stay home if you feel unwell. If you have a fever, cough, and difficulty breathing, seek medical attention and call in advance. Follow the directions of your local health authority.