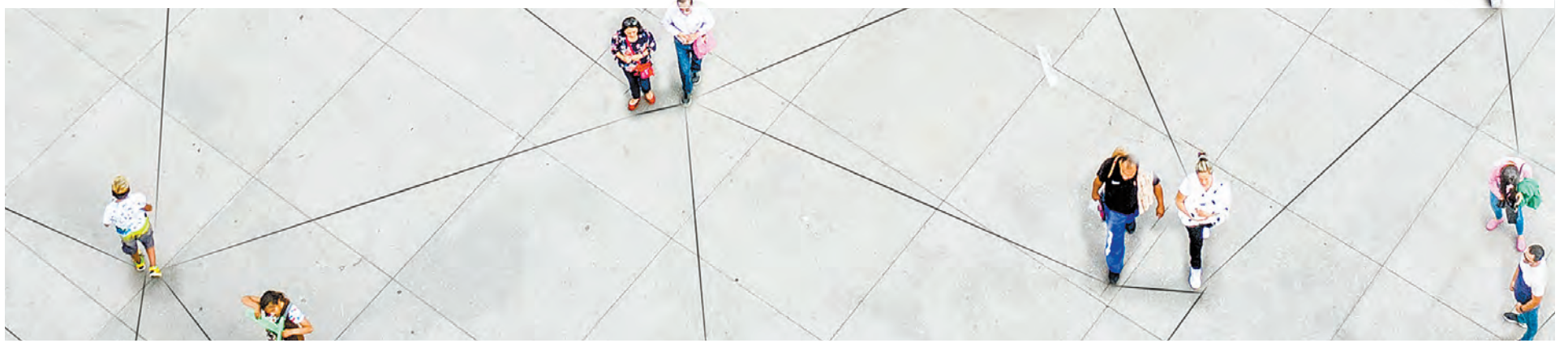


# CORONA VIRUS

## A GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING COVID-19 AND TIPS FOR COPING

The Express-News has created this section as a community service to help answer your questions about the COVID-19 pandemic.



Getty Images

## Think you've got it? Here's what to do

Follow safety practices to protect others, and call your doctor or an urgent care clinic

By Amy Graff and Richard A. Marini  
STAFF WRITERS

You're showing signs of illness – a cough, runny nose, fever – how do you know whether you have a cold, the flu or COVID-19, the new coronavirus that is spreading around the globe?

The answer is: It's difficult to tell for sure unless you have been tested by a

medical professional. In San Antonio, testing is still limited, so it's important to know what to do if you suspect you have the disease.

The first six confirmed cases of community-spread coronavirus in San Antonio were announced Thursday. This means the infection cannot be traced to travel or close contact with an infected person.

That makes a total of 29 confirmed cas-

es – eight that are travel related, four due to close contact with an infected person and 11 that are still being investigated.

It's difficult to tell if someone actually has the coronavirus, said Dr. Lee Atkinson-McEvoy, a pediatric doctor at the University of California, San Francisco.

"They're seeing people who have milder disease, so just a cough and runny nose, but no fever," Atkinson-McEvoy said. "Some people who test positive are

asymptomatic."

Coronaviruses are among a group of viruses that cause the so-called "common cold," and there are seven known ones that can infect humans.

Four of these (229E, HKU1, OC43 and NL63) are seasonal and typically cause mild respiratory infection – fever, cough, nasal congestion and headache, according to Dr. Charles Chiu, a professor of lab-

*Infected? continues on H5*



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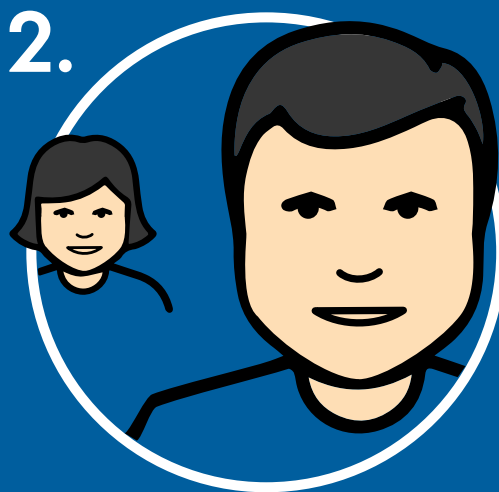


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# 3 Ways To Keep You Well



1. Wash your hands often



2. Practice social distancing as much as possible



3. Stay informed but take breaks from media as needed

Here are three ways to keep yourself physically and mentally healthy amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

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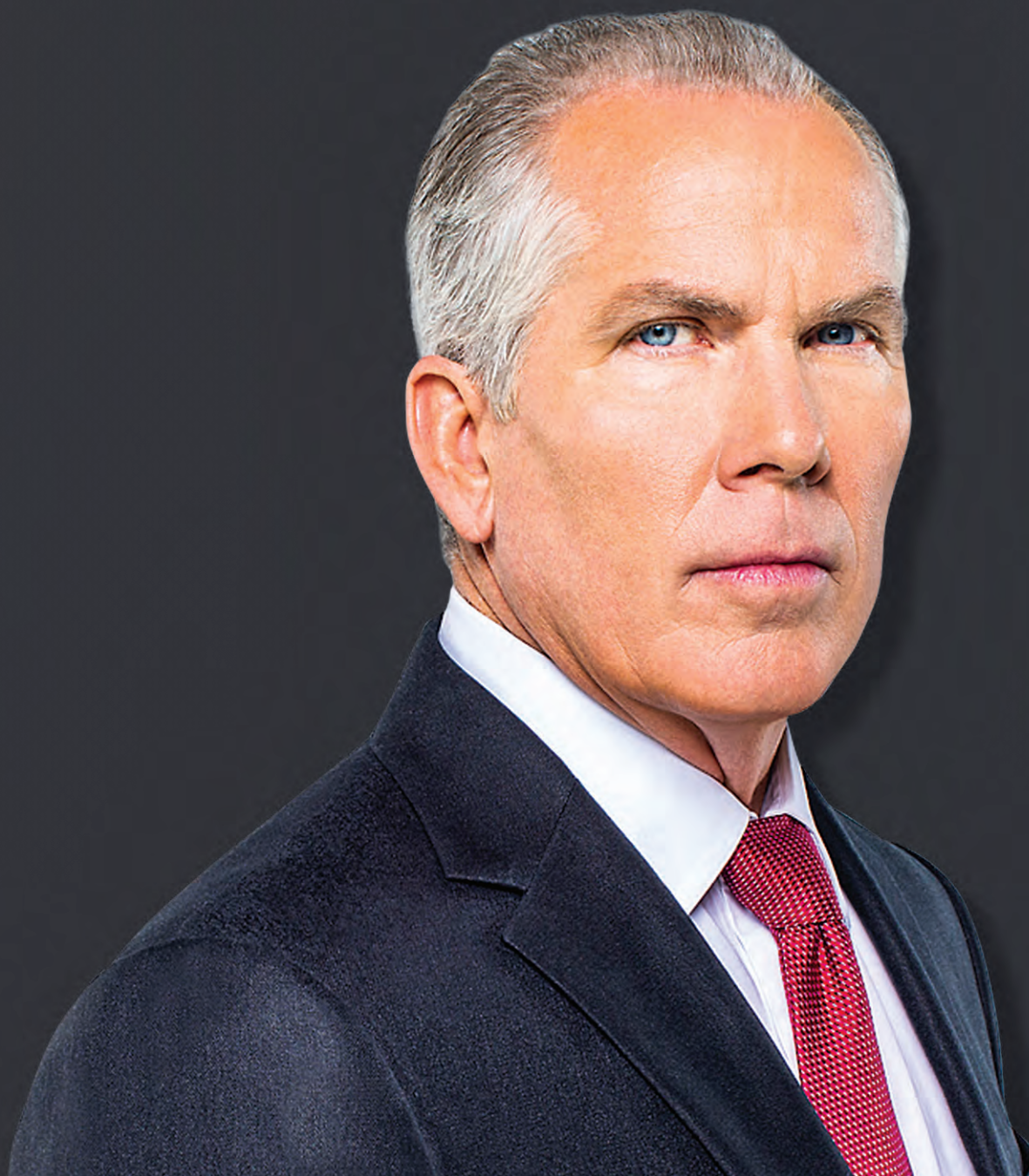
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My name is Gary Warrington, Owner of Amazing Exteriors here in San Antonio. I am writing you today regarding our response to the COVID-19 virus. The foundation of Amazing's business is meeting with people in their homes to discuss their window, door and siding needs. Our service is personal in nature, which elevates our responsibility to take appropriate steps to ensure your safety. With that in mind, we will be taking the following extra precautions to make sure we are conducting business as safely as possible:

1. Sales Team members who are exhibiting any signs of illness will not be allowed to meet with clients;
2. All Sales Team members will use a hand sanitizer before entering your home and they will also sanitize their measuring devices and tape measures using disinfectant wipes;
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Sincerely,

*Gary Warrington*

**Gary Warrington**

Owner



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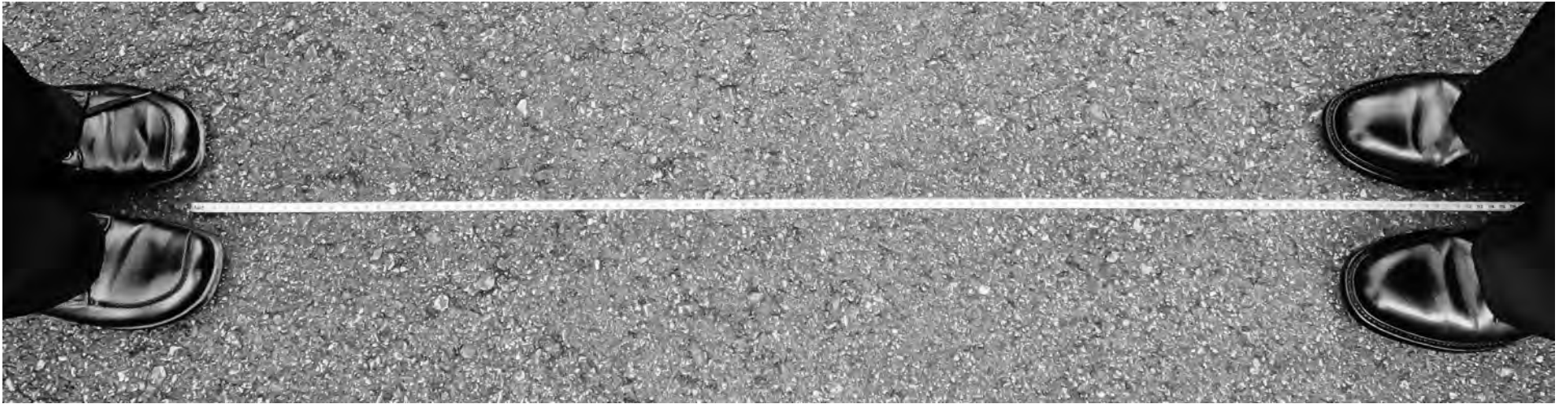
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## CORONAVIRUS SPECIAL REPORT

# Keeping your distance really works

Put at least 6 feet between you and others — and no touching



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By following the simple rules of social distancing, individuals can help protect themselves and others. For now, it's the only way to slow the spread of COVID-19.

By **Thomas Perls**  
THE CONVERSATION

As the coronavirus spreads into more and more communities, public health officials are placing responsibility on individuals to help slow the pandemic. Social distancing is the way to do it.

Geriatrician Thomas Perls explains how this crucial tool works.

## What is social distancing?

Social distancing is a tool public health officials recommend to slow the spread of a disease that is passed from person to person. Simply put, it means that people stay far enough away from each other so the coronavirus — or any pathogen — cannot spread from one person to another.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention describes social distancing as staying away from mass gatherings and keeping 6 feet or 2 meters — about one body length — away from other people.

As a response to CDC recommendations for social distancing, theaters have closed, many conventions around the world are being canceled and schools are closing all across the U.S. I've stopped taking the train during rush hour. Now I either work from home, drive in with my wife or take the train during off-hours so I can maintain the 6-foot distance.

Social distancing also means not touching other people, and that includes handshakes. Physical touch is the most likely way a person will catch the coronavirus and the easiest way to spread it.



Justin Paget / Getty Images

Another recommendation is to “self-quarantine.” This means staying put and isolating yourself from others because there is a reasonable chance you have been exposed to the virus.

Remember, keep that 6-foot distance and don't touch.

Social distancing can't prevent 100 percent of transmissions, but by following these simple rules, individuals can play a critical role in slowing the spread of the coronavirus. If the number of cases isn't kept below what the health care system can handle at any one time — called flattening the curve — hospitals could become overwhelmed, leading to unnecessary deaths and suffering.

There are a few other terms besides social distancing that you are likely to hear. One is “self-quarantine.” This means staying put, isolating yourself from others because there is a reasonable possibility you have been exposed to someone with the virus.

Another is “mandatory quarantine.” A mandatory quarantine occurs when government authorities indicate that a person must stay in one place — for instance, their home or a facility — for 14 days. Mandatory quarantines can be ordered for people who test negative for the virus but likely have been exposed. Officials have imposed mandatory quarantines in the U.S. for people on cruise ships and those traveling from Hubei province in China.

## Why does it work?

If done correctly and on a large scale, social distancing breaks or slows the chain of transmission from person to person. People can spread the coronavirus for at least five days before they show symptoms.

Social distancing limits the number of people an infected person comes into contact with — and potentially spreads the virus to — before they even realize they have the coronavirus.

It's very important to take a possibility of exposure seriously and quarantine yourself. According to recently published research, self-quarantine should last 14 days to cover the period of time during which a person could reasonably present with symptoms of COVID-19, the disease caused by the coronavirus.

If after two weeks they still don't have symptoms, then it's reasonable to end the quarantine.

## Why is it so crucial?

At the moment, it's the only

tool available to fight the spread of the coronavirus.

Experts estimate that a vaccine is 12 to 18 months away. For now, there are no drugs available that can slow a coronavirus infection.

Without a way to make people better once they fall sick or make them less contagious, the only effective tactic is ensuring hospital-level care is available to those who need it. The way to do that is to slow or stop the spread of the virus and decrease the number of cases at any one time.

## Who should do it?

Everyone must practice social distancing to prevent a tidal wave of cases. I am a geriatrician who cares for the most vulnerable people: frail older adults.

Certainly, such individuals should be doing all they can to protect themselves, diligently practicing social distancing and significantly changing their public ways until this pandemic blows over. People who are not frail need to do all they can to protect those who are most at risk by helping minimize their exposure to COVID-19.

If the public as a whole takes social distancing seriously, overwhelming the medical system could be avoided. Much of how the coronavirus pandemic unfolds in the U.S. will come down to individuals' choices.

*Thomas Perls is a professor of medicine at Boston University. This article is from The Conversation, a nonprofit that distributes scholarly findings in accessible form.*

## INFECTED?

From page H1

laboratory medicine and infectious disease at UC San Francisco.

“The remaining three coronaviruses (MERS, SARS, COVID-19) are the result of recent zoonotic (animal-to-human) transmission events, and although they are also associated with mild respiratory symptoms, infection can progress to cause severe, life-threatening pneumonia,” Chiu shared in an email.

COVID-19 is the most recently discovered coronavirus and was unknown before the outbreak began in Wuhan, China, in December. A vaccination or antiviral medication isn't yet available to treat it, according to the World Health Organization. People who are seriously ill should be hospitalized.

The flu, aka seasonal influenza, is similar to COVID-19. It also causes respiratory infection and also can lead to severe pneumonia.

“The symptoms between common cold viruses, COVID-19 and the flu overlap significantly,” wrote Chiu. “Death from coronavirus in patients with pneumonia is thought to be a combination of direct damage of the viral infection to the airways (bronchiolitis and/or pneumonia), an abnormal immune response (“cytokine storm”), and secondary bacterial infections. This is similar to the way people die from flu.”

With the flu, the elderly, very young or those with compromised immune systems are at the highest risk for severe disease. The current data available and research on the novel coronavirus suggest the elderly and people with compromised immune systems are more susceptible to serious complications and children are at a lower risk, Atkinson-McEvoy said.

The latest estimates based on the reported number of cases and deaths around the world suggest that the death rate from COVID-19 infection is about 2 percent, but



Getty Images

It's impossible to confirm if a patient has coronavirus without a test. In San Antonio, tests — for now — are preapproved only for first responders, health care workers and VIA bus drivers.

this may change as the epidemic progresses. For comparison, SARS had a death rate of about 10 percent and seasonal influenza has a death rate of 0.1 percent.

That said, Dr. Lee Riley, a UC Berkeley professor and chair of the Division of Infectious Disease and Vaccinology, adds that the mortality rate is frequently higher at the beginning of epidemics because “we don't know how to deal with them.”

“We have vaccines for influenza, so this contributes to its lower rate, but if we didn't have the vaccines, the mortality rates for influenza would be higher than 0.1 percent,” Riley said. “Also, mortality rates for influenza vary according

to the virus strain causing the epidemic, which changes every year. So it's too simplistic to compare mortality rates of two very different types of virus infections.”

Those who suspect they might have COVID-19 should call their family physician or an urgent care clinic for an appointment, according to Dr. Anita Kurian, assistant director of communicable disease with Metro Health District.

“And when you get there, practice proper respiratory etiquette,” she said, including wearing a face mask if you have one, sneezing or coughing into a handkerchief, tissue or the crook of your arm, and not standing or speaking too close to others.

While a test for the virus is slowly becoming more available, it's only being given to those who have been exposed to the disease and have symptoms, such as fever and cough or shortness of breath. They also need a doctor's preapproval, according to the Metro Health website.

Testing has also been preapproved for first responders, health care workers and VIA bus drivers. Test results should be received within two business days.

Those who cannot afford a doctor's visit or who have additional questions may call Metro Health's COVID-19 hotline at 210-207-5779.

agraff@sfgate.com

## What to do if you are sick

Steps to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 if you are sick.

» **CALL AHEAD:** If you have a medical appointment, call the healthcare provider and tell them that you have or may have COVID-19.

» **IF YOU ARE SICK:** You should wear a facemask when you are around other people.

» **STAY HOME:** Isolate at home during the illness. You should restrict activities outside your home, except for getting medical care.

» **STAY AWAY FROM OTHERS:** As much as possible, you should stay in a specific room and away from other people in your home. Also, you should use a separate bathroom, if available.

» **COVER:** Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.

» **DISPOSE:** Throw used tissues in a lined trash can.

» **WASH HANDS:** When washing hands, use soap and water for at least 20 seconds. And clean your hands often.

» **CLEAN AND DISINFECT:** Practice routine cleaning of high touch surfaces.

» **STAY AT HOME UNTIL INSTRUCTED TO LEAVE:** The decision to discontinue home isolation precautions should be made on a case-by-case basis, in consultation with healthcare providers and state and local health departments.

Source: CDC

TNS



# Hands away from the face

Experts offer suggestions for controlling this hard-to-break, infection-spreading habit

By Stephen D. Benning, Brian Labus and Kimberly A. Barchard  
THE CONVERSATION

Public health officials consistently promote hand-washing as a way for people to protect themselves from the coronavirus. However, this virus can live on metal and plastic for days, so simply adjusting your eyeglasses with unwashed hands may be enough to infect yourself.

Thus, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the World Health Organization have been telling people to stop touching their faces.

We are experts in psychological science and public health. Brian Labus is an expert in communicable diseases who knows what people should do to avoid becoming infected. Stephen Benning is a clinical psychologist who helps clients change their habits and manage stress in healthy ways. Kimberly Barchard is an expert in research methods who wanted to know what the research says about face-touching.

Together, we used our clinical expertise and the research literature to identify the best practices to reduce face-touching and lower people's chances of catching COVID-19.

People touch their faces frequently. They wipe their eyes, scratch their noses, bite their nails and twirl their mustaches. People touch their faces more when they are anxious, embarrassed or stressed, but also when they aren't feeling anything at all. Studies show that students, office workers, medical personnel and people on trains touch their faces between nine and 23 times per hour, on average.

Why is it so hard to stop? Face-touching rewards us by relieving momentary discomforts like itches and muscle tension. These discomforts usually pass within a minute, but face-touching provides immediate relief that eventually makes it a habitual response that resists change.

## Change habitual behaviors

Habit reversal training is a well-established behavior modification technique that helps people stop a variety of seemingly automatic behaviors, such as nervous tics, nail-biting and stuttering. It trains people to notice the discomfort that prompts their habits, select another behavior to use until the discomfort passes and change their surroundings to lessen their discomfort.

You may have already changed some of your other habits—for example, by coughing into your elbow instead of your hands or greeting others with a bow or wave instead of a handshake. But



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**If allergies make you rub your eyes, take antihistamines. And use a tissue when adjusting your glasses.**

unlike coughing and hand-shaking, people frequently touch their faces without being aware of doing so. So the first step in reducing face-touching is becoming aware of it.

Each time you touch your face, notice how you did it, the urge or sensation that preceded it and the situation you were in, what you were doing, where you were physically or what you were feeling emotionally.

If you usually don't notice when you touch your face, you can ask someone else to point it out.

Self-monitoring is more effective when people create a physical record. You can create a log where you briefly describe each instance of face-touching. For example, log entries might say:

- Scratched nose with finger, felt itch, while at my desk.
- Fiddled with eyeglasses, hands tingled, frustrated.
- Rested chin on palm, neck sore, while reading.
- Bit fingernail, nail caught on pants, watching TV.

Self-monitoring is more effective if people share their outcomes publicly, so consider sharing your results with friends or post it on social media.

## Create new responses

Now that you are aware of the behavior you want to change, you can replace it with a competing response that opposes the muscle movements needed to touch your face. When you feel the urge to touch your face, you can clench your fists, sit on your hands, press your palms onto the tops of your thighs or stretch your arms straight down at your sides.

This competing response should be inconspicuous and use a position that can be held for at least a minute. Use the competing response for as long as the urge to touch your face persists.

Some sources recommend object manipulation, in which you occupy your hands with something else. You can rub your fingertips, fiddle with a pen or squeeze a stress ball. The activity shouldn't involve touching any part of your head. For tough-to-break habits, object manipulation isn't as effective as competing responses, perhaps because people tend to play with objects when bored but touch their faces and hair when anxious.

## Manage your triggers

Changing your environment can reduce your urges to touch

your face and your need to use alternative responses. Use your log to figure out what situations or emotions are associated with your face-touching. For example:

- If your glasses keep slipping off your nose, you can use ear hooks or hair ties to prevent slippage.
- If you bite your nails, you can use a file to keep your nails short, or wear gloves or fingertip bandages so that nail-biting is impossible.
- If allergies make your eyes or skin itch or make your nose run, you can limit your exposure to allergens or take antihistamines.
- If you get food stuck between your teeth, you can brush your teeth after each meal.
- If your hair gets in your eyes and mouth, you can use an elastic band, a scarf or a hair product to keep it back.

## You may not be able to stop

Most people cannot entirely eliminate unwanted habits, but they can reduce them. Consistent with the principles of harm reduction, just reducing face-touching lessens the opportunities for viruses to enter your system.

Sometimes you need to touch your face: flossing your teeth,

putting in contact lenses, wiping food off your lips, putting on makeup or shaving your jaw. Remember to wash your hands first.

To adjust your glasses without first washing your hands, use a tissue and throw it out immediately after use. Avoid finger food and using unwashed hands to put food into your mouth. Wash your hands first, or use utensils or the wrapper to handle the food.

Other ways you can reduce the spread of infectious diseases include practicing social spacing, washing hands thoroughly with soap and water or hand sanitizer, and disinfecting high-touch surfaces regularly. When your hands touch contaminated surfaces, though, these suggestions may help you avoid touching your face before you wash them again.

*Stephen D. Benning is an assistant professor of psychology, Brian Labus is an assistant professor of epidemiology and biostatistics, and Kimberly A. Barchard is a professor of quantitative psychology, all at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. This article is from The Conversation, a nonprofit that distributes scholarly findings in accessible form.*

# No need to panic, stockpile or hoard

Experts explain what's needed, say to think of others

By Madison Iszler  
STAFF WRITER

Fearing prolonged quarantines and shortages, shoppers have been flooding grocery stores around San Antonio, stockpiling toilet paper and bottled water, leaving empty shelves in their wake.

Coronavirus worries sent locals running to H-E-B, Walmart, Target and Costco, where they grabbed wipes, hand sanitizer, rice, beans, dog food and canned tuna. Others loaded their carts with hand soap, laundry detergent, and boxes of macaroni and cheese.

"A madhouse" is how a customer at H-E-B's Wurzbach Road store described the scene recently.

H-E-B has cut store hours for the foreseeable future to give employees ample time to restock shelves, as did Walmart and other grocers.

H-E-B is also capping the purchase of certain items, adding extra security and offering pharmacy and next-day pickup for free.

Retailers are urging customers not to panic, a sentiment Texas Gov. Greg Abbott echoed recently after declaring a state of disaster.

"There is absolutely no need to go out and stockpile supplies," Ab-

bott said.

So what should San Antonians purchase to get through the coronavirus pandemic?

Those at higher risk of becoming ill from the virus—the elderly or those suffering from a serious chronic medical condition such as heart disease—should stock up on over-the-counter medicines, medical supplies, groceries and household goods, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

They should also ask their doctor about getting extra medication.

"If you cannot get extra medications, consider using mail-order," the CDC suggests. "Have enough household items and groceries on hand so that you will be prepared to stay at home for a period of time."

Medical professionals recommend buying two weeks' worth of groceries and cleaning supplies, and having prescriptions filled.

"Make the assumption that you can't go back to the grocery store for two weeks," said Cherise Rohr-Allegrini, a local public health consultant who specializes in epidemiology. "It's not a hurricane situation" in which shelves might not restocked for longer than that.

Most important, stay calm.

"People are kind of freaking out and buying a whole lot of things," said Dr. Arti Thangudu, an endocrinologist who runs a San Anto-



Bob Owen / Staff photographer

**Shoppers line up early Monday at the Deco District H-E-B. Medical professionals say two weeks' worth of groceries and supplies is enough.**

nio practice called Complete Medicine. "Think about your neighbors, think about everybody else. Make sure everybody is able to prepare."

These are the items the experts suggest stocking up on—without hoarding:

**Nonperishable and frozen foods:** Beans, lentils and rice will last a while in your pantry. So will soup and pasta.

**Fruits and vegetables:** Keep in mind you can stick both in the freezer.

**Toilet paper, wipes and hand sanitizer:** Buy enough of each to

get you through two weeks. Buy only the amount you will need.

**Medication:** Get a month's supply of prescription medications and over-the-counter medicines, Thangudu suggested. If you have diabetes, stock up on testing strips and other supplies.

**Bottled water:** There's no need to stockpile it, according to the San Antonio Water System.

"Between the quality of our source water, the chlorine disinfection and chlorine testing, there is no concern about coronavirus being transmitted through our

public water system," said Gavino Ramos, vice president of communications and external affairs for the city-owned utility. "Our water supply is absolutely safe to drink. We are a 24/7 operation, and we will continue to provide water to the city under all circumstances."

**Cleaning supplies:** Keep enough Lysol, bleach and other supplies on hand to last a month.

"People don't need to get hysterical and buy gallons and gallons of bleach," Thangudu said.

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## CORONAVIRUS SPECIAL REPORT

By Paul Stephen  
STAFF WRITER

# Markets meet demand for meat and more

Independent and lesser-known stores stocked with food items scarce elsewhere

The coronavirus outbreak has sharply limited availability of many kitchen staples across San Antonio, sending shoppers scrambling for chicken, beef, a decent salad, milk and more.

A trip to the H-E-B at Wurzbach Road and Interstate 10 early last week found a bare-bones meat aisle with a lone package of chicken necks in the poultry case, a few cuts of pork and a couple briskets remaining. Workers were hustling to restock rapidly disappearing fresh produce, with the selection of bagged greens looking particularly sparse.

Sprouts Farmers Market on Callaghan Road had some fresh seafood, including whole sides of wild-caught salmon, but aside from a few pricey cuts of filet and packages of turkey necks and turkey backs, the meat department was bare. Dairy cases were about half empty of milk, yogurt and cheese. Forget trying to find ginger root – a staple in traditional medicine with some clinically tested benefits – at either store.

At Central Market, the selection of organic produce was sparse. Packaged ground chicken, racks of pork ribs and expensive wagyu brisket were among the few meat options left. No bagged or boxed salad greens or carrots could be found. Rice was available, but quantities were rationed.

But mainstream supermarkets aren't the only place to find food in San Antonio. That same night, shoppers in the know could find plenty of chicken, rice and produce at independent grocery stores, international markets and meat markets across the city.

While these stores might not be part of many San Antonians' everyday shopping routines, they can be dependable sources for many of the staples they crave. Early last week, there was ample chicken, pork and beef among other meats at area meat markets. Rice, beans, bread and fresh produce could be found without quantity restrictions at multiple international grocery stores.

We checked in with several of these stores to see what they had in stock last week. Here's what we found.

**Al Madina Meat Market:** This halal meat market doesn't stock pork, but it was well supplied with chicken, beef, lamb and goat. Al Madina also stocks a wide range of canned and boxed Mediterranean items, such as pickles, stuffed grape leaves and other flavorful ways to spice up your homebound meals. 9218 Wurzbach Road, 210-949-0430, [almadinameatmarket.com](http://almadinameatmarket.com)

**Bolner's Meat Co.:** This San Antonio institution has been around since 1914 and knows how to manage just about any kind of crisis. The shelves were well lined with chicken, beef and pork, and general manager Joe



Wiatrek's Meat Market

The owner of Wiatrek's Meat Market expects a robust inventory for the foreseeable future.



Chuck Blount / Staff file photo

The halal Al Madina Meat Market was stocked with chicken, beef and lamb, as well as goat.

Doria said he expects those inventories to stay robust. He did note that customers should expect a longer wait than usual but that the store would still be able to meet most demands, including for specialty items such as Iberico and Berkshire pork. 2900 S. Flores St., 210-533-5112, [bolnersmeatcompany.com](http://bolnersmeatcompany.com)

**Himalayan Bazar:** This large South Asia-oriented grocery has a completely vegetarian inventory. It was out of a small number of varieties from the large selection of rice but remained otherwise well stocked in grains, legumes and beans. Himalayan Bazar also had a large selection of yogurts, cheese and other dairy products, and hard-to-find produce items, such as fresh ginger, in ready supply. 8466 Fredericksburg Road, 210-614-8600, Facebook: [@HimalayanBazarSanAntonio](https://www.facebook.com/HimalayanBazarSanAntonio)

**Man Pasand International Food Market:** This large Asian grocery store had a limited quantity of fresh produce during a visit Monday evening but was well stocked in rice, grains and other pantry staples. The store's small halal meat selection included several beef and chicken options, including whole birds for \$12.99. 3727 Colony Drive, 210-462-7111, Facebook: [Manpasand International Food Market San Antonio](https://www.facebook.com/ManpasandInternationalFoodMarketSanAntonio)

**Pearl Farmers Market:** The suspended Pearl Farmer's Market has launched online ordering and curbside pickup for produce, meat, dairy, eggs and other food items. Orders placed by midnight Wednesdays will be available for pickup 4-7 p.m. Fridays. The Pearl Stable, 307 Pearl Parkway, [pearlfarmersmarketcurbside.com](https://www.facebook.com/pearlfarmersmarketcurbside.com)

**Sasha's European Market:** This Eastern European grocery store was still carrying a wide range of sausages and remained stocked with pickles, jams, caviar, sweets and other European treats. Buckwheat was the only item that had a quantity restriction. 8023 Callaghan Road, 210-348-7788, Facebook: [@sashasmarket](https://www.facebook.com/sashasmarket)

**Tri-County Meat Market:** Lines were long, but this market remained stocked with fresh chicken, beef, pork and house-made sausages. This is a good stop if you have pets at home, as it also carries beef bones and smoked pig ears. 13215 Huebner Road, 210-474-6827, [tricountymeat.com](https://www.facebook.com/tricountymeat.com)

**Wiatrek's Meat Market:** This meat market doubles as a butcher shop with its own steady supply of beef, and owner Carter Ray says he expects to maintain a robust inventory for the foreseeable future. The display cases were a little thin Tuesday, but the shop's coolers were fully stocked with fresh chicken, beef and pork for customers to order at the counter. 8517 Blanco Road, 210-562-3222, [wiatreksmeatmarket.com](https://www.facebook.com/wiatreksmeatmarket.com)

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## Food delivery companies put emphasis on safety

Changes designed to protect customers, aid employees

By Paul Stephen  
STAFF WRITER

Social distancing is the norm amid the coronavirus pandemic, and food and meal delivery apps are making changes to help protect their customers and drivers.

No-contact drop-off, cleaning supplies for delivery crews, financial relief programs for drivers and suspending fees to restaurants are just some of the measures businesses such as Grubhub, Uber Eats, Favor and others have adopted in response to the virus.

Here are some of the policies these companies have implemented.

**DoorDash:** San Francisco-based DoorDash has added a no-contact delivery option. The company is also providing two weeks of financial assistance to drivers diagnosed with COVID-19 or ordered to self-quarantine by a public health official.

**Favor:** This Austin-based subsidiary of H-E-B has updated its app to provide an option for drivers to leave orders at the door.

Favor is distributing a limited supply of cleaning supplies to drivers to disinfect steering



Anna-Rose Gassot / Getty Images

Uber Eats customers can request their food be left outside the door by adding a note in the app when placing an order.

wheels, cellphones, insulated bags and other high-contact objects. Favor is providing up to four weeks of financial assistance to delivery workers diagnosed with COVID-19 or asked to self-quarantine by a public health agency or medical professional.

**Grubhub:** Grubhub has added a contact-free delivery option, found during checkout on its app.



Dreamstime

Grubhub is offering contact-free delivery and has created a relief fund.

The company is deferring commission fees to independent restaurants impacted during the coronavirus outbreak. It's also created the Grubhub Community Relief Fund, which allows customers to round up the cost of their purchases and donate that extra change to charitable organizations supporting delivery drivers and restaurants.

**Postmates:** Postmates has rolled out a no-contact delivery option for customers; it's under the "delivery options" section of its app.

The company also has launched a pilot program in the San Francisco area in which it is waiving commission fees to restaurants that apply for relief. Postmates is asking restaurant associations and government agencies interested in participating in the program to email [askpmpublicpolicy@postmates.com](mailto:askpmpublicpolicy@postmates.com).

Postmates is covering copays and other medical expenses related to COVID-19 for its drivers regardless of diagnoses and providing two weeks paid sick leave to drivers diagnosed with the disease.

**Uber Eats:** Customers can request their food be left outside the door by adding a note in the app when an order is placed.

The company is working to provide disinfectants to drivers, although in a statement on its website, Uber Eats noted supplies are limited and it will focus on distributing them in cities most affected by the virus. Drivers diagnosed with COVID-19 or ordered to self-quarantine will receive financial assistance for up to 14 days.

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# Bogus claims vs. scientific facts

Part of staying healthy is knowing what is and isn't true about virus

By Mike Moffitt  
SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE

Spreading nearly as fast as the outbreak of the novel coronavirus in China are misconceptions, bogus cures and deliberate misinformation about the disease.

No cure or vaccine exists for COVID-19, but that hasn't stopped people and bots from pushing phony treatments and questionable health advice online.

We have collected some of the more ludicrous of the claims flagged by the World Health Organization and other health observers. In addition, we included a few precautions that legitimate medical professionals recommend.

The presumed source of the new coronavirus is an animal market in Wuhan, China. Some scientists believe it originated with bats but may have jumped to another animal before infecting humans.

**A vaccine for COVID-19 exists:** FALSE. Even though President Donald Trump announced there would be one "soon," scientists say the earliest date for one would probably be 18 months from now. However, you should get a flu shot if you haven't yet — it is proven to protect against other viruses.

**Your cat or dog might infect you with COVID-19:** FALSE. Domestic animals do not spread the disease.

**Marijuana and/or cocaine use cures the new coronavirus:** FALSE. Social media bots are suspected of spreading these baseless rumors.

**Eat oranges to ward off COVID-19:** FALSE. There's no evidence that taking vitamin C or eating fruit high in vitamin C protects against infection.

**Washing your hands vigorously and frequently is probably the best defense against infection:** TRUE.

**If you are healthy, wearing a face mask keeps you safe from COVID-19:** FALSE. However, if you are sick, wearing a well-fitted facial respirator can prevent you from spreading the disease to others.

**Humans contracted COVID-19 from bats:** POSSIBLY. Bats have been known to harbor several types of coronaviruses. However, viral video purportedly of a woman eating a bat in Wuhan, China, the source of the outbreak, was actually filmed in Palau, Micronesia. Some scientists think the virus jumped from bats to another animal before infecting humans. The endangered and often illegally trafficked pangolin could be the link.

**The new coronavirus is linked to eating meat:** FALSE.



Rapeepong Puttakumwong / Getty Images

**It is possible that humans contracted COVID-19 from bats.**



Jose A. Bernat Bacete / Getty Images

**There is no vaccine — yet — for COVID-19.**



Getty Images

**Coconut oil will not kill the novel coronavirus.**

This unfounded claim was made by PETA UK.

**Red marine algae shows promise as a treatment for the new coronavirus:** FALSE. It may stop the virus that causes cold sores (herpes). Its suggested use as a treatment for COVID-19 is linked to "holistic" healer Gabriel Cousens, but there's no science to support that remedy.

**Coconut oil can kill the novel coronavirus:** FALSE. A health official in the Philippines said coconut oil was "being looked into" as a possible cure. Don't believe it.

**Antibiotics are effective against COVID-19:** FALSE. Antibiotics treat bacteria, not viruses.

**You should rub sesame oil on your skin to block the new coronavirus:** FALSE. Another phony precaution. Save your sesame oil for stir-fried vegetables.

**Flushing nasal cavities with water protects against the new coronavirus:** FALSE. But it may clear a stuffy nose.

**Sanitizing gel with a high alcohol content is effective in protecting against COVID-19:** TRUE. But hand-washing is probably better.

**Packages mailed from China are not dangerous to open:** PROBABLY NOT. The latest study suggests COVID-19 can last up to 24 hours on cardboard. But domestic same-day shipments



Vesna Jovanovic / Getty Images

**Oranges will provide vitamin C; what they won't do is block the coronavirus.**

could theoretically carry the virus.

**Thermal scanners can tell if you're infected:** FALSE. These scanners detect fevers, but they can't tell if a person is infected if no fever is present. COVID-19 reportedly takes up to two weeks of incubation before manifesting symptoms such as fever.

**Avoid people who exhibit symptoms of a respiratory ailment:** TRUE. This is common sense, of course. In China, there have been reported cases of people taking this one step further and eliminating as much contact

with people as possible. Living as a hermit will protect you, but it's not a lifestyle many will embrace.

**Spraying or rubbing alcohol or bleach over your body can kill the virus:** FALSE. Not if it's already entered your body. It will, however, cause skin irritation. Drinking bleach can be fatal.

**Eating garlic will safeguard you from the new coronavirus:** FALSE. It is, however, a healthy vegetable and a good addition to your diet.

**Germicidal ultraviolet lamps can be used to sterilize your hands against COVID-19:**

FALSE. UV light can cause skin irritation.

**Hand dryers destroy the new coronavirus microbes:** FALSE.

**Old people are more likely to die from the new coronavirus than the young:** TRUE. Especially seniors with pre-existing conditions such as heart disease, diabetes and lung conditions. However, for reasons that are not yet clear, COVID-19 kills healthy young people as well.

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# Aging immune systems slow to fight virus

That's why in this race within the human body, COVID-19 has the advantage in older people

By Brian Geiss  
THE CONVERSATION

The rapidly spreading coronavirus pandemic is taking a particularly harsh toll on older people.

Data from the initial outbreak in China and then Italy show infected people younger than 60 are at low — but not zero — risk of dying from COVID-19. More recent data from the U.S. suggest a higher rate of people in their 30s and 40s have experienced severe illness and death than previously thought.

Young children do not appear to be at increased risk of serious COVID-19 complications, in contrast to what happens with other viruses, such as the seasonal flu.

However, the statistics get grimmer as the patients get older. People in their 60s have a 0.4 percent chance of dying, people in their 70s have a 1.3 percent chance of dying, and people older than 80 have a 3.6 percent chance of dying. While this may not sound like a high chance, during the current outbreak in Italy, 83 percent of those who succumbed to COVID-19 infection were older than 60.

The new coronavirus SARS-CoV-2, which causes COVID-19, is therefore a very serious pathogen for people over 60. As the virus spreads, this older age group will continue to be at risk for serious

disease and death.

What is it that puts older people at increased risk? It's primarily thought to be due to changes in the human immune system as we age.

As you go about your life, your body is constantly bombarded by pathogens, the bacteria, fungi and viruses that can make you sick. A human body is a great place for these organisms to grow and thrive, providing a warm environment with plenty of nutrients.

That's where your immune system comes in. It's your body's defense system against these invaders. Before you're even born, your body starts producing specialized B-cells and T-cells, types of white blood cells that can recognize pathogens and help block their growth.

During an infection, your B-cells can proliferate and produce antibodies that grab onto pathogens and block their ability to spread within your body. T-cells work by recognizing infected cells and killing them. Together they make up what scientists call your "adaptive" immune system.

Maybe your physician has checked your white blood cell levels. That's a measurement of whether you have more B-cells and T-cells in your blood than usual, presumably because they're fighting infection.

When you're very young, you



Daniel Balakov / Getty Images

**Older people are at more risk from COVID-19 because of how the immune system ages.**

don't have a lot of B- or T-cells. It can be a challenge for your body to control infection because it's simply not used to the job. As you mature, your adaptive immune system learns to recognize pathogens and handle these constant invasions, allowing you to fight off infection quickly and effectively.

While white blood cells are powerful protectors, they're not enough. Luckily, your immune system has another layer, your "innate" immune response. Every cell has its own little immune system that allows it to directly respond to pathogens quicker than it takes to mobilize the adaptive response.

The innate immune response is tuned to pounce on types of molecules commonly found on bacteria and viruses but not in human cells. When a cell detects these invader molecules, it triggers production of an antiviral interferon protein. Interferon triggers the infected cell to die, limiting infection.

Another type of innate immune cell, called a monocyte, acts as a sort of cellular bouncer, getting rid of any infected cells it finds and signaling the adaptive immune response to shift into gear.

The innate and adaptive immune systems can act together as a fine-tuned machine to detect and clear out pathogens.

When a pathogen invades, the difference between illness and health is a race between how fast it can spread and how fast your immune response can react without causing too much collateral damage. As people age, their innate and adaptive immune responses change, shifting this balance.

Monocytes from older individuals produce less interferon in response to viral infection. They have a harder time killing infected cells and signaling the adaptive immune response to get going.

Low-grade chronic inflammation in individuals that commonly occurs during aging can also dull the ability of the innate and adaptive immune responses to react to

pathogens. It's similar to becoming used to an annoying sound over time.

As you age, the reduced "attention span" of your innate and adaptive immune responses make it harder for the body to respond to viral infection, giving the virus the upper hand. Viruses can take advantage of your immune system's slow start and quickly overwhelm you, resulting in serious disease and death.

Everyone, no matter their age, needs to protect themselves from infection, not just to keep themselves healthy but also to help protect the most vulnerable. Given the difficulty older individuals have in controlling viral infection, the best option is for these individuals to avoid becoming infected by viruses in the first place.

The best way to protect vulnerable older and immunocompromised people is to stay away from them until there is no longer a risk. By stopping the spread of SARS-CoV-2 throughout the population, we help protect those who have a harder time fighting infection.

Brian Geiss is an associate professor of microbiology, immunology and pathology at Colorado State University. This article is from *The Conversation*, a nonprofit that distributes scholarly findings in accessible form.



## CORONAVIRUS SPECIAL REPORT



Oliver Rossi / Getty Images

If you feel healthy, get out and take a walk — or just dance around the house. If you go out in public, though, practice social distancing.

By Nita Bharti  
THE CONVERSATION

## Protecting 'our bodies, our mentals and our chicken' in this new normal

And remember to reach out to others amid these difficult, but doable, changes in daily life

Millions of people are asking for clear, comprehensive information and guidelines regarding the novel coronavirus. Unfortunately, the U.S. public hasn't received prompt factual information or direction from the federal government. Instead, the government has underreported cases and local transmission rates due to a lack of testing kits.

But during a crisis, leadership can come from unexpected places.

As he suspended all NBA games, commissioner Adam Silver delivered a powerful message to the public that the outbreak must be taken seriously. With that single announcement, Silver enforced more effective public health policy than the White House had during this pandemic.

Shortly thereafter, all other major sports leagues followed his lead; the NBA's decisive action helped the dominoes fall.

In January, NFL running back Marshawn Lynch delivered solid advice for his younger colleagues in a postgame interview: Take care of your bodies, your mentals and your chicken (that is, your money). Fortuitously, this is also applicable for everyone during COVID-19.

As an assistant professor of biology at Pennsylvania State University, I study infectious disease risks and preventive solutions. I know the only way to stop this outbreak and prevent severe cases is to reduce transmission. Without all of us changing our behavior, those who are more likely to experience severe outcomes will have negative health outcomes.

While the elderly and people with respiratory conditions are at highest risk, severe cases have also been reported in young, otherwise healthy people. Without behavioral interventions, so many patients will require hospitalization, they will exceed the capacity of the U.S. health care system. This will cause preventable deaths.

Reducing overall transmission will protect the most vulnerable members of our communities and keep the health care system functioning. You are no longer making decisions for only yourself; you have to constantly consider how your personal behavior is going to impact everyone around you and everyone around them.

So far, no pharmaceutical interventions, such as vaccines and antiviral drugs, exist. At the moment, we must rely on basic public health measures: Wash your hands frequently, don't touch your face, use hand sanitizer and limit your exposure to others. It may sound simplistic, but those things are enormously helpful. Nonpharmaceutical interventions are extremely effective against infectious diseases; all Ebola epidemics prior to 2014 are just one example.

Right now, this means avoiding direct physical contact with others. Avoid groups of more than 10,



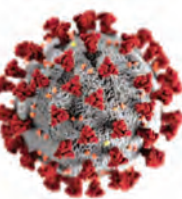
Klaus Vedfelt / Getty Images

Even if you and your family are staying at home, reach out to friends and family through texts, video chats or phone calls to maintain a feeling of connection.

### If you decide to self-quarantine...

- ▶ Think of 14 days as being your target.
- ▶ Don't be too isolated. Regular conversation with friends, by phone and internet, will keep you motivated.
- ▶ Be wary of misinformation. Isolation may breed internet obsession, and a lot of virus "news" just isn't true.
- ▶ Don't fear mental health help. If all the bad news becomes overwhelming, reach out to a professional.
- ▶ Exercise, if you feel up to it. Just stay away from crowds.
- ▶ Avoid sharing drinking glasses, eating utensils, towels, bedding, TV remotes, computers, even pets.
- ▶ Have a purpose. Keep your living space clean. Work on a project. If you're not sick, accomplish something.
- ▶ Monitor your symptoms. Get medical advice if you develop a fever, cough or sore throat. But remember, it's also normal flu season.

Sources: CDC, MITMedical, various online medical forums



An example of a coronavirus

Mike Fisher/Staff artist

reduce or eliminate nonessential travel, and expand the space between you and others to practice social distancing. Give yourself about 6 feet of space.

But if you're not feeling sick, you don't have to become sedentary or trapped indoors. Go for a walk, dance around your house, or tune into on-demand fitness or YouTube instructors. If you think you're getting sick (or if you're already sick), you need to stay home and keep away from others. Self-quarantine is a good idea anytime you think you have an infectious disease.

Social distancing is actually physical distancing; it does not mean social isolation. During this outbreak, your mental health is critical and vulnerable. Social support helps and is also linked to physical health. It's all connected.

Make efforts to be in touch with family, friends, colleagues or classmates who are telecommuting. Any direct communication will be supportive: email, texts, video chats, phone calls. It's likely someone you know will end up in quarantine or isolation for 14 days, and it will be psychologically challenging. Help them, but don't take

on all the responsibility. Create a schedule to have a different friend or relative check in with them.

Also note that social media can have negative impacts on mental health. Don't assume Instagram puppies will keep your quarantined friends fully supported.

Missing travel or events you've been excited about will bring disappointment. It's OK to feel sad about losses that seem trivial right now.

The endless stream of news, with rapidly changing information and misinformation, can be overwhelming. The lack of a large-scale management plan from the government might leave you frustrated. Take a moment to acknowledge those feelings. Now more than ever, don't face your anxiety alone.

Finally, the meaty part of all this: Don't blow your paycheck stockpiling months of food and supplies. Don't panic and buy every possible over-the-counter drug. Buy what you need and leave the rest for others.

It is a good idea to check your prescription medications and make sure you've got a month's supply on hand. Assess the shelf-stable foods you have. You may own enough unexpired cans and products to get you through several days. Aim to have two to four weeks of nonperishables around so you don't have to shop frequently, and base your decisions on what you can safely spend and store.

We don't know how the federal government's promise of free coronavirus testing will roll out operationally, given the shortage of test kits, but the importance of free testing cannot be overstated. People don't get tested if they're worried about costs. And that's a huge problem: Unreported or mild cases lead to transmission that is nearly impossible to stop.

Employers also need to encourage and reward responsible self-quarantining behavior. Paid sick leave would vastly improve compliance with self-quarantine measures. A system where sick days translate to lost wages promotes virus transmission.

This outbreak will continue to change our lives. We will not go back to the way things were in two weeks. We are looking ahead to a new normal. To protect the most vulnerable members of our communities, the less vulnerable must make responsible and unselfish choices.

The necessary interventions to manage this outbreak have been unprecedented and sometimes unpopular but necessary. Lynch wisely instructed us to protect our bodies, our mentals and our chicken. Now it's our responsibility to extend that to protecting each other.

Nita Bharti is an assistant professor of biology at the Center for Infectious Disease Dynamics at Pennsylvania State University. This article is from *The Conversation*, a nonprofit that distributes scholarly findings in accessible form.

### Coronavirus and stress

Taking care of yourself, your friends, and your family can help you cope with stress. Helping others cope with their stress can also make your community stronger.

▶ Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including social media. Hearing about the pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting.

▶ Take care of your body. Take deep breaths, stretch, or meditate. Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, exercise regularly, get plenty of sleep, and avoid alcohol and drugs.

▶ Make time to unwind. Try to do some other activities you enjoy.

▶ Connect with others. Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling.

Source: CDC



TNS



# Smart cleaning, good hygiene roadblocks to transmission

Everyday objects are avenues to infection; clean them — and your hands — often



Suriyo Hmun Kaew / Getty Images

One study suggests the coronavirus can survive outside the body for up to three days on stainless steel and plastic.

By Joseph Eisenberg  
THE CONVERSATION

One vomiting episode from someone infected with norovirus emits billions and billions of individual viruses. That's enough to fuel an outbreak — and is exactly what happened in an elementary school in Seattle, Washington a few months ago. More than 100 children got sick with the stomach-churning bug, and the school doors remained closed until workers could decontaminate the lockers, desks and hallways.

You might think of germs mostly passing directly from one person to another, but the outbreak in Seattle illustrates how they can survive on and be transmitted by inanimate objects in the world around us. Epidemiologists like me call these everyday objects — such as doorknobs, elevator buttons and cellphones — fomites, and when contaminated, these fomites can make you sick.

Fomites can be an important pathway of disease transmission. They were the main culprits in that norovirus outbreak in Seattle last year and have been the cause of many other outbreaks.

In 1908, smallpox outbreaks were traced to contaminated imported cotton. More recently, outbreak studies in day care centers have identified viruses on toys, phones, toilet handles, sinks and water fountains.

The coronavirus is spreading quickly. As concern has increased, I've seen more people washing their hands and using hand sanitizer than ever before.

While there is still a lot we don't know about the new coronavirus, history would suggest that there is probably some transmission from fomites. Everyone should be washing their hands and using hand sanitizer, but taking efforts to clean the things around you is also important to fight the spread of the virus.

For instance, in the last major coronavirus pandemic, SARS in 2002, contaminated surfaces were a major contributor to more than 300 cases in a Hong Kong apartment building.

When thinking about how risky transmission via fomites is in an outbreak, the important question is, how long can a particular bug



Emilija Manevska / Getty Images

Clean items you touch frequently, such as cellphones and doorknobs, with a disinfectant. Though it's impossible to create a germ-free environment, this will decrease the risk of illness.

survive on surface? And there is a lot of variation.

Some pathogens can last outside the body for only minutes, while others are hardier and can hold on for days or even months. A new study suggests that the novel coronavirus can survive on some surfaces up to three days, but it varies depending on the material. The study found that the virus could survive for 24 hours on cardboard and up to three days on plastic and stainless steel.

This variation is caused in part by the properties of the surface a virus lands on. Porous material like clothing may allow pathogens to survive longer, but it can be harder for a virus to move from your shirt to someone else's fingers. The matrix fibers in nonporous materials can trap germs making it hard for them to transfer.

On the other hand, viruses can more readily transfer from nonporous materials like the glass screen on your phone to fingers, but the virus won't always survive as long on a glass surface compared to a sweater. Environmental conditions such as temperature and humidity also influence the viability of a pathogen in the environment.

It's nearly impossible to keep anything in the real world virus-free, but during outbreaks like this one, it's a good idea to try to

minimize the number of viruses on fomites around you. Some people are practically bathing in hand sanitizer and wiping down everything they touch with disinfectant. But whether this works depends on what virus you are hoping to kill.

Norovirus, for example, is notoriously hardy. After an outbreak on a cruise ship in 2002, the next group of passengers got sick more than a week later even after a thorough cleaning of the ship. Many standard cleaners such as alcohol or Lysol do not kill norovirus. It takes something as strong as chlorine bleach to get the job done.

In contrast to norovirus, influenza is much less persistent in the environment. While influenza is often lurking in day care centers during flu season, it typically lasts on surfaces only for hours or a few days. And if you wanted to clean off your phone or countertop, simply wiping it down with an alcohol-based product or ammonia is effective.

While virologists don't know much about how tough the current coronavirus is, past coronaviruses have fallen somewhere between norovirus and the flu. Like influenza, Lysol will likely kill the coronavirus.

But you don't necessarily need to kill the virus to make yourself safer. Removing the virus can be

just as effective and simply washing often-used objects or your hands with soap can do that.

If you have been in crowded areas or want to be extra careful, washing your hands with soap for 20 seconds will effectively remove germs, and disinfecting tabletops and gym equipment with ammonia will effectively kill most germs. It is important to clean the objects you touch frequently, like keyboards, tabletops and gym equipment.

But while fomites are known to be the culprits in many outbreaks, an individual's risk depends on a lot of factors. Someone who touches contaminated surfaces frequently, like a health care worker, is more likely to get sick than someone who doesn't.

Risk also depends on personal habits, such as how often one touches their eyes, nose and mouth. And for most infectious diseases, whether someone gets sick and the severity of the illness depends on age and underlying health conditions.

Cleaning objects frequently with a disinfectant is the best way to mitigate the risk of transmission from everyday objects. Hand-washing is also important, especially if done reliably right after coming home from a public place.

Given that germs are ubiquitous, it's easy to become germ-

## 5 steps to wash the right way



By following some basic steps on the proper way to wash your hands, you can help reduce your risk and do your part to protect others, if your community is affected by the coronavirus.

▶ Wet your hands with clean running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.

▶ Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers and under your nails.

▶ Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the "Happy Birthday" song from beginning to end twice.

▶ Rinse your hands well under clean running water.

▶ Dry your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

## No sink? Use sanitizer

Washing hands with soap and water is the best way to get rid of germs in most situations. If soap and water are not readily available, you can use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.




Source: CDC

TNS

phobic and strive for a sterile environment. But keep in mind that while basic precautions are important, germs will always find a way to exploit our human environment. You can and should minimize risk, but germs are here to stay.


Joseph Eisenberg is the professor and chair of epidemiology at the University of Michigan. This article is from *The Conversation*, a nonprofit that distributes scholarly findings in accessible form.



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# OVERCHARGE? OR OVERDELIVER?

**During times like these, should this even be a question?**

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We choose to overdeliver.

We're still here for our wholesale customers. But we're adapting to our community's needs during the current situation. By adding online retail service at reasonable prices, free home delivery and curbside pickup. So we can all continue to put food on our tables and stay safe as we overcome this.

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for free home delivery or  
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**CORONAVIRUS SPECIAL REPORT**

# Help H-E-B help you and others

By Priscilla Aguirre  
STAFF WRITER

With many rushing to H-E-B during the coronavirus epidemic, the grocery store would like customers to follow some etiquette suggestions. These will help employees as they work to keep products stocked.

On its social media accounts, H-E-B released this list of things customers can do while shopping at one of its stores:

- When you pull a product off the shelf, pull the next item forward.
- Bag your own groceries.
- Throw away trash in your cart.
- Return your cart to the front of the store, not the corral.
- Be kind and shop for your neighbors.

“Thank you, Texas, for the outpouring interest from people looking for ways to lend a hand at H-E-B,” the company added.

*priscilla.aguirre@express-news.net | @CillaAguirre*



Mark Mulligan / Staff photographer

Employees at H-E-B are working to keep their stores stocked. Customers can assist them by following a few suggestions.



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# Resilience.

At Methodist Healthcare, and through our partnership with the HCA Healthcare network and Methodist Healthcare Ministries, we’re no stranger to threats. We deal with them daily.

Infectious diseases. Natural disasters. Unspeakable emergencies.

Some may say that managing life-threatening situations is part of business as usual for an advanced healthcare network like Methodist Healthcare. And it’s true.

Thankfully, with Methodist being part of the HCA Healthcare family, that’s exactly what has helped us build a sharp set of best practices and a robust network of response teams, who help us mobilize quickly and scale accordingly in times of need.

As the threat from the COVID-19 virus is amplified, so too are our efforts. Here are just a few of the steps we are taking to assure uninterrupted care:

- We’re limiting entry into hospitals and clinics so anyone who enters into patient care areas can be carefully screened, and masks can be provided to those who need them.
- Every employee, caregiver, and physician has been asked to follow a self-screening procedure, because protecting our patients starts with protecting our people.
- Precautions taken to treat patients with COVID-19 are similar to those taken to treat patients with influenza, with restricted visitation to limit exposure. This is commonplace procedure for us during any flu season.
- As always, cleaning to prevent the spread of infection is occurring throughout all of our care sites.
- We are providing care to patients with COVID-19 who require hospitalization. These patients are cared for in isolated areas of the hospital, so we can safely provide continuous care for all other medical needs.

As this latest threat evolves, we are collaborating with federal and local health agencies, providing timely and practical updates that will help contribute to accurate reporting and consistent guidelines. While the well-being of our patients and people remains our immediate priority, we know that sharing insights can impact care far beyond the communities we serve.

In the face of a threat, we don’t panic, we prepare.

In the weeks ahead, and as always, we are here when you need us, because that’s what family does.



## San Antonio Express-News

**“Thank you to our community partner Rudy’s BBQ. Through their partnership, they have given us the opportunity to individually thank every person who produces, prints and delivers the newspaper in the most critical of times.”**



**“Rudy’s is now offering curbside pickup for all pre-paid orders at all four San Antonio area locations. As a way of providing some relief to our guests and community, Rudy’s is also offering a 25% discount on pre-paid curbside pickup orders. Order online at [leonspringsbbq.com](http://leonspringsbbq.com) and enter the discount code EXPRESS25.”**

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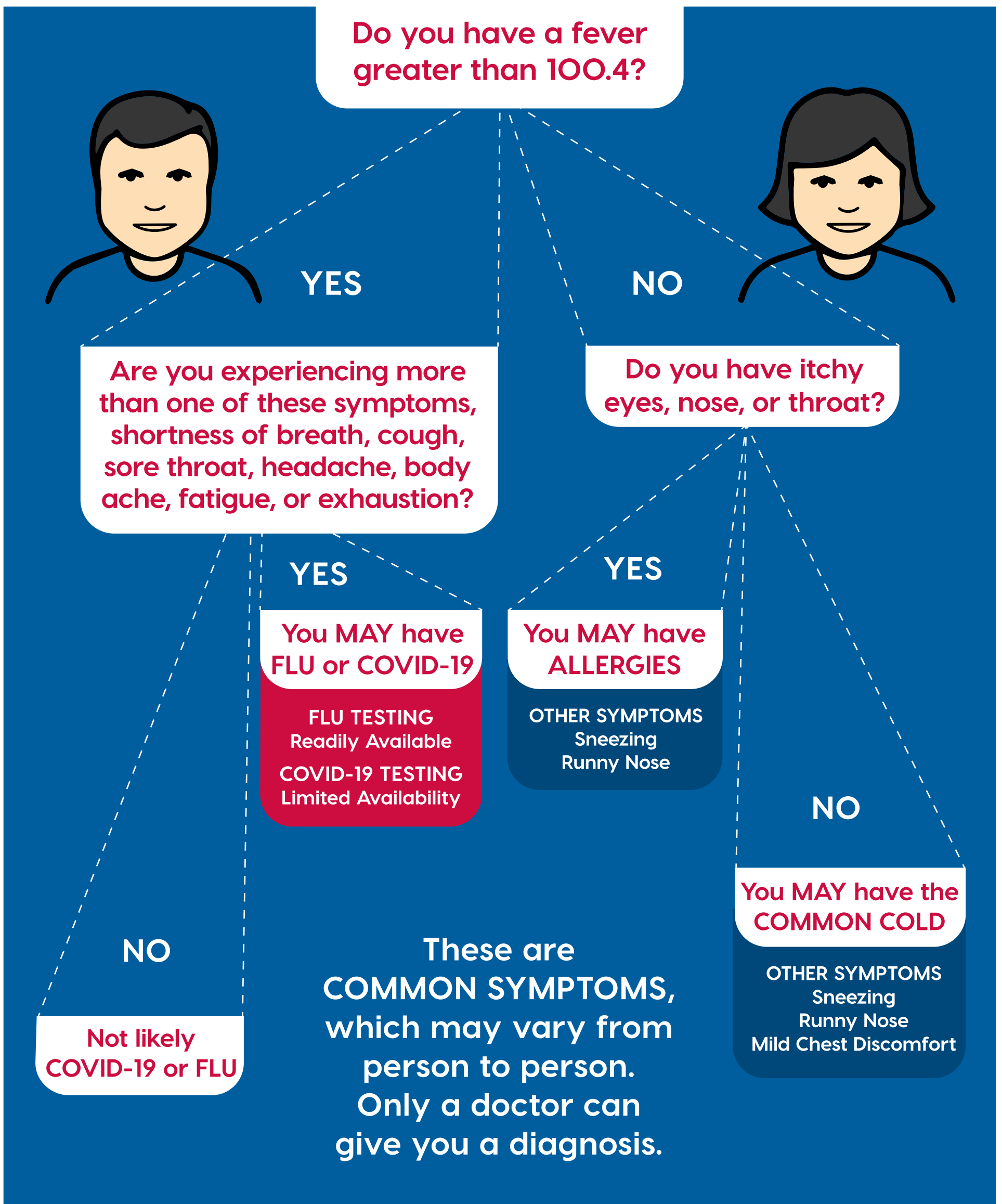
**Selma**  
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