

CORONAVIRUS EMERGENCY PROTOCOL: HOW CAN YOU BE PREPARED?

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Coronavirus Emergency Protocol: How can you be prepared | Narayana Health

The coronavirus strain, COVID-19, is rapidly spreading all over the world and the panic is quite real. However, the more aware you are of the coronavirus prevention steps, the better off you will be. The prevention steps are essential to protect yourself and your loved ones, even if you are not at risk at the moment its best to be prepared.

The risk of contracting the virus in India is low, but there are reported cases of infected patients coming into the country, almost every day. Officials have now declared that there is a possibility of an outbreak in the country, it's not a matter of "if it happens" but more like "when it happens".

This is the best time to review your game plan and make sure that the risk of getting the virus is extremely low. Here are some of the major decisions you can take to plan, prepare, and prevent the spread of the disease.

The virus is not as deadly as other outbreaks, but it's contagious:

More than three-quarters of the cases reported in China were classified as mild. The symptoms included fever, low-grade cough and respiratory difficulties. Some of the patients also experienced

fatigue, diarrhoea, and headaches. The overall death rate in China is estimated at 2 per cent, and the average age of the deceased is in the 70s. People who have underlying medical problems and poor immune health seem to be at higher risk of getting infected.

If you compare other coronavirus outbreaks like SARS and MERS, the coronavirus outbreak is less deadly. For instance, over the past years, the death rate for MERS was 34% and 10% for SARS. The common flu is also known to cause more than 12,000 deaths, but some vaccines prevent it. So far there is no vaccine developed to prevent this new coronavirus strain, but the same strategies used to prevent the flu can be used as protection against COVID-19.

Follow flu prevention tips:

As mentioned before, you must follow flu prevention tips to protect yourself against coronavirus. The best tip is washing your hands as frequently as possible. Viruses are highly contagious and they take time to incubate in the body, they can spread from one person to another through respiratory droplets. So, when an infected person coughs or sneezes, close contact can lead to an infection. Also, the virus can end up on surfaces that are constantly used by several people like doorknobs, elevator buttons, and so on. If you touch any of these surfaces, and end up touching your face, then the chances of getting infected are quite high.

Hence, according to the CDC guidelines, you must wash your hands well. When washing your hands you have to be thorough, which means you have to scrub your hands with a disinfectant soap/hand wash for at least 20 seconds. Ensure that you reach under the fingernails and between the fingers; this process is essential after visiting the bathroom, before eating, after blowing your nose/coughing/ sneezing. According to the CDC, here are five things you have to keep in mind:

Avoid close contact with people who are sick

Don't touch your eyes, nose, or mouth without washing your hands

Every time you cough or sneeze, cover your mouth with a tissue. Dispose the used tissue immediately.

Disinfect and clean the surfaces of objects that are cleaned frequently, use wipes or solutions that are anti-septic.

If you feel sick, please contact your doctor or physician at the earliest. Then stay at home

Don't panic and start preparing:

It's very easy to start panicking when we watch the news or read articles about the spread of COVID-19, and the rising number of infected patients; also, the media can sensationalize an issue and make a bad situation seem more fatal than it is. In times like this, it's imperative that you get your facts

straight, be aware, and be prepared. Look at the possible outbreak, like you would a hurricane, if it hits then you will be prepared and if it doesn't then great!

However, this doesn't mean that you hoard up on perishable food items and cleaning supplies; but it's a good idea to keep a healthy stock of food, so every time you shop at the grocery store you can pick up a few extra items for yourself. Here are some ways you can ensure optimum preparation-

Checking if you have enough medication

Thinking about a backup plan if schools close down during an outbreak

If you have a daily prescription, keep your medicines in as much supply as possible

Request your employer for a work-from-home option

Masks don't assure 100% protection:

Even though people are rushing to purchase a mask, you have to understand that they will not provide you with full protection, and the evidence that they do protect you is not conclusive. The usefulness of masks to prevent infection is uncertain. Masks may not fit the face tightly, which means you are still likely to inhale infected droplets. Experts also say that masks provide a false sense of security, and it's recommended that only if you're nearby an infected person then a mask can help you.

Myths associated with coronavirus infection:

Hot weather helps prevent the virus- While the cold may accelerate your sick condition, your body temperature will be around 36 degrees regardless of the external temperature. Therefore, you should prevent getting the disease by washing your hands frequently.

Taking a hot bath can prevent the coronavirus- this is a myth because the external temperature won't affect the spread of the virus within your body. Avoid taking scalding hot baths as it's harmful to your skin

The coronavirus can be transmitted through mosquitoes- This is false because it's a respiratory disease which will spread through infected droplets caused by sneezing or coughing.

What if a loved one is infected by COVID-19?

Before you jump to conclusions and start panicking, you need to call your health care provider immediately. Once it's confirmed that you're infected with the disease, you will have to contact your local health board and find out the best hospital for evaluation and treatment. Patients who have a history of respiratory illness should seek emergency medical care, some of the intense symptoms are rapid heartbeat, decrease in blood pressure, very high or very low body temperatures, trouble

breathing, and severe dehydration. You should inform your ER so that they can prepare for your arrival.

Helpline number for coronavirus in India:

According to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, the helpline numbers for Novel CoronaVirus is +911123978046 and the helpline email id is ncov2019@gmail.com.