

How **your community** can prevent the spread of COVID-19

You are key to keep your loved ones safe! This document suggests key actions on how your community can stay safe and slow down the spread of COVID-19, particularly for contexts where you might have been asked by your local authorities to maintain physical distance or stay home.

Localise and implement three basic steps:

1) Learn

2) Act

3) Help

1) Learn

- ❑ **Stay up to date** with the latest COVID-19 information from your national and local health authority, the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#), [United Nations Children's Fund \(UNICEF\)](#), [IFRC websites](#), or your local Red Cross or Red Crescent. On [social media](#) (including Twitter, Instagram and TikTok) use verified information from WHO, UNICEF, IFRC and your local Red Cross or Red Crescent. On [WhatsApp](#) use [WHO](#) and [UNICEF](#)'s COVID-19 Information Chatbots. Only share verified information with your peers, family and community.
- ❑ **Do share verified information** with your peers, family and community. People get information from many sources and it's often hard for them to identify which information is reliable and trustworthy. Rumours and misinformation can stop people from taking preventive actions or convince them to do things that increase their risk of infection.

Ask:
 - ✓ **Where** is this information from? Does the person or channel sharing the information have access to scientific evidence? The Ministry of Health in your country, WHO, UNICEF and National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies are reliable sources to gather relevant information.
 - ✓ **When** was this information first published or shared? Sometimes old information keeps circulating.
 - ✓ Do address misconceptions by providing verified information and being open for questions
- ❑ **Know how to protect the most vulnerable people.** COVID-19 is a particular threat to older people and those who are already sick or have pre-existing medical conditions. If they get COVID-19 they could get seriously ill or even die.
- ❑ **Know what to do and be prepared for when a family member is ill (and isolated)** or might have been infected with COVID-19 (see below).

2) Act

- ❑ **Ensure you and your loved ones know what to do to address the risks of COVID-19:**
 - ✓ Wash your hands with soap appropriately and often and avoid touching your face.
 - ✓ Cover your coughs and sneezes (use a tissue or your bent elbow).

- ✓ Avoid handshakes and close contact. Think of new ways to greet people that don't involve physical contact.
- ✓ Maintain a clean home by disinfecting surfaces regularly with standard household cleaning products.
- ✓ Limit activities outside of your home as much as you can.
- ✓ Stay home as much as possible, particularly if you have a fever or cough or feel unwell.
- ✓ If you must go outside, stay at least 1 metre (3 feet) apart and avoid public spaces. **By keeping at least one metre distance from people, the risk of being exposed to the virus decreases dramatically.**
- ✓ Share this information with your neighbours and friends.
- ✓ Print out the advice from health authorities and ask managers of public spaces to put them up.

☐ **Create your own plan on how to prepare for COVID-19**

- ✓ Plan for your basic needs. Ensure that you have supply of food, water and medicine for about one-two weeks in case you are asked to stay at home or go into quarantine. Also know who could help you with fetching water or grocery shopping if you cannot afford to buy supplies or cannot leave your home due to illness. Get in touch with local support services (i.e national authorities organised services or Red Cross Red Crescent) to ask if and how they can help.
- ✓ Anticipate what impact travel restrictions or business closures may have on you and others. Plan for how to address those impacts.
- ✓ Stay in touch with others through phone calls or social media, especially if you live alone.
- ✓ Reach out to people who don't have phones through their neighbours or local volunteers in their neighbourhood.
- ✓ Plan for how you will care for someone in your family who becomes sick and who will care for you, especially if you or they live alone.

The below WHO recommendations should help you and your family prepare for when one of you get sick (the below recommendations are in addition to all recommended handwashing, sneezing, coughing and physical distancing practices contained in this documents):

<p>Person with a suspected case of COVID-19 should:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stay in a separate room from other family members or behind a screen if sharing a room. - Keep a distance of at least one metre from others and wear a medical mask when in the same room as any other household member. - If possible, use a separate bathroom. If not possible, use the bathroom last, clean all common surfaces such as doorknobs, taps and sinks thoroughly afterwards - Use dedicated dishes, cups, eating utensils, and do not share them. - Use dedicated towels and bedlinens, and wash your own laundry if possible - Rest, drink plenty of fluids and eat nutritious food.
<p>Caregiver of a suspected COVID-19 patient should:</p> <p>Follow the guidance on Home care for patients with suspected</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wear a medical mask when in the same room with the ill person. Do not touch the mask during use. Discard mask after use in a closed bin - Clean hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub after any type of contact with the ill person or their surroundings; before and after preparing food; before eating; and after using the toilet. - Wash dishes, cups, eating utensils, used by the ill person with soap and water or in a dishwasher.

novel coronavirus (nCoV) infection presenting with mild symptoms and management of contacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wash towels, or bedlinens with soap and water or in a washing machine, if possible separately to those of the other members of the household. - Regularly clean and disinfect surfaces frequently touched by any or all family members (such as counters, tabletops, doorknobs, banisters, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, kettles, and bedside tables). - Double-bag any rubbish used by the ill person. - Contact your dedicated national hotline, health care facility or doctor if the symptoms of the ill person become more severe, or if they have trouble breathing.
Other family members should:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do not share linen, towels, hand-towels, mugs, glasses and utensils - Monitor for symptoms such as fever and cough. If a family member has difficulty breathing, contact your COVID-19 hotline, health care facility or doctor immediately - Avoid direct physical contact with infected patient, including kissing and hugging. Find no-contact ways of expressing affection. - Wash your own laundry separately (where possible).

3) Help

Check in with others in your community/neighbourhood; learn what else your community is doing to prepare; talk to your neighbours about ways to support your community and share important information from your local authorities on how to prepare and respond to COVID-19 with your loved ones and neighbours. In particular:

- ❑ Talk about risks and how to address them **with older family members**, friends and neighbours, or people with pre-existing medical conditions.
 - ✓ The risk is higher for them and they might be worried. While 40% of people with COVID-19 have mild (symptoms are fever, tiredness and dry cough) or no symptoms, some people may experience shortness of breath, runny nose, aches and pain and sore throat. It can be more severe for some people (20%) and lead to pneumonia or breathing difficulties. For example, older people, people with a weak immune system or existing illnesses (such as diabetes, high blood pressure and heart or lung disease) may be more vulnerable to becoming severely ill and requiring ventilation in a hospital setting.
 - ✓ For most people, COVID-19 is mild and like a cold, symptoms are fever, tiredness and dry cough. Some people may experience shortness of breath, runny nose, aches and pain and sore throat. It can be more severe for some people and lead to pneumonia or breathing difficulties. For example, older people, people with a weak immune system or existing illnesses (such as diabetes, high blood pressure and heart or lung disease) may be more vulnerable to becoming severely ill.
 - ✓ Have a conversation with them. First listen, to understand their concerns and questions. Ask them what they already know and want to know about COVID-19.
 - ✓ If you don't know how to answer some of their questions, check online resources to find more information (see 'Learn'). Many frequently asked questions are provided to support your needs.
 - ✓ Follow their advice on what they need and check if they need extra help with everyday things like shopping.
 - ✓ Recommend they stay home and away from public places.
 - ✓ Do not physically visit them if you feel unwell or have been in contact with someone with COVID-19 like symptoms. Check in regularly via phone or online.
 - ✓ Make sure they have supply of any regular medication they need for one-two weeks.

- ✓ Do reach out to organisations on domestic violence to learn how you can support their work. For some people, home is not a safe place to be. If your community is expected to stay at home, be aware of the increased risk of domestic violence in some households.
- ❑ **Model good COVID-19 prevention behaviour.** Be careful about challenging people directly on their understanding. Instead share and practice specific recommendations, addressing the information that might be unclear and allowing people to ask questions if unclear.
- ❑ **Form a community volunteer team¹** with neighbours to coordinate and address neighbourhood needs. If restrictions of movement apply, plan how you can continue to stay in touch (such as through a WhatsApp group). Learn what skills and resources are available among people within your neighbourhood. Identify who in the neighbourhood might need special assistance preparing for an emergency and make sure someone in the team checks on them. Learn what volunteers protective measures will be needed to make this work and discuss how you will ensure you don't inadvertently put people or yourselves at risk. Contact your local Red Cross Red Crescent branch to link with other local volunteers.

Protect **schools**

- ❑ Learn about the emergency plan of your school, which should be based on guidance from national and local education authorities. Check the latest [guidance for schools](#):
- ❑ Offer to help communicate with other parents on the latest COVID-19 information and school plans.
- ❑ If schools are still open, don't send your child to school if they have a cold, feel unwell or have been in contact with someone who has COVID-19 like symptoms.
- ❑ Make a plan for your family if the local school closes and share tips and resources on activities to do with children at home.

Protect your **workplace/business**

- ❑ Follow available guidance from your employer, authorities and WHO. You can find WHO guidance at <https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/getting-workplace-ready-for-covid-19.pdf>
- ❑ Update the plan for your workplace for how you will address current and future risks and how you will maintain or adapt your operations. Include what to do if someone becomes ill in your workplace. The Atlas app for small businesses to plan for emergencies can help: [Overview of Atlas app](#) | [iOS download](#) | [Android download](#)
- ❑ Make sure your workplaces are clean and hygienic. Promote regular and thorough handwashing by employees and customers. Reduce exposure by minimizing employee and customer contact including alternative arrangements for pick-ups and deliveries. Talk to businesses you work with to ensure they are also taking preventative measures.
- ❑ Brief your employees, suppliers and customers on the preventive measures your workplace is taking. Display posters with these messages in your workplace.
- ❑ Plan for the impacts of travel restrictions or business closures on your workplace or event. Explore ways to meet or operate virtually or remotely. Access the latest travel advisory information.
- ❑ Don't go to work if you feel unwell or have been in contact with someone who has COVID-19 like symptoms.

¹ Here is an example guide from the New Zealand Red Cross 'Good and Ready' program: https://www.redcross.org.nz/documents/217/NZRC_Good_and_Ready_Members_Guide.pdf.



Adapt and translate this note into your local language and share it with your neighbours to offer your help:

Be safe and be kind to one another²:

Hello! We are a small group of your neighbours who want to help each other out during difficult times.

If you are home and cannot go out (because you are sick, are at high risk due to COVID-19, have family members to care for etc.), I can help:

My name is.....

I live in (street name and neighbourhood)

My phone number/email is.....

(fill in how you can be reached, i.e. text, call, WhatsApp)

I speak (add languages here):

I, or someone in our small group can help with:

<input type="checkbox"/> Doing grocery shopping	<input type="checkbox"/> Buying urgent supplies
<input type="checkbox"/> A friendly call	<input type="checkbox"/> Posting mail
<input type="checkbox"/> Bringing out the trash	<input type="checkbox"/>

Just call or message me and I'll do my best to help you (for free).

If you want to join the group of those keen to help others in our neighbourhood, please share your details and I can add you to our list.

² * This is a global initiative. Search for #viralkindness online