

Coronavirus – Learn, Plan, Protect and Stay Calm

We are in a challenging season right now: Cold, Influenza and the new coronavirus. The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared the coronavirus a pandemic and the Center for Disease Control (CDC) is monitoring the situation and issuing suggestions for prudent ways to contain the spread of the virus. As we manage through the coming weeks, it is important to remain calm and to focus on the things that we can control. Remember, everyone is experiencing this together, so it is more important than ever to be kind, learn, plan and protect each other both physically and emotionally.

1. Don't Panic and Be Kind

Remember, every year we encounter influenza season, so don't panic. Coronavirus is a flu-like illness and its symptoms can be managed similarly to how we manage the flu. Right now, it feels unsettling because it is new to us and we have been encouraged to minimize exposure by practicing social distancing. While protecting ourselves from exposure and controlling the spread of the virus is our best defense, the call for broadscale social distancing impacts us from an emotional perspective. Since everyone is experiencing the same concerns, it is imperative that we are kind and supportive of each other and remain positive. Kind words and positivity are helpful for a resilient outcome.

PAS' website, www.paseap.com, provides additional information including the below handouts:

- ❑ Fostering Resilience
- ❑ Finding Security in an Uncertain World

2. Learn

Learn steps to protect yourself from any virus

- ❑ Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- ❑ Instead of shaking hands or hugging, try a fist bump, elbow bump or a simple "hello"
- ❑ Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands
- ❑ Wash your hands often with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds (pick your favorite song to sing while washing)
- ❑ Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue, or the inside of your elbow, when you sneeze or cough
- ❑ Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol, if soap and water are not available
- ❑ Wipe down workspaces, phones, computers, tablets, etc. with a disinfecting wipe that does not contain bleach. Contact your device manufacturer's website if you are unsure about which sanitizing agent to use
- ❑ Practice other good health habits including getting plenty of sleep, being physically active, managing your stress, drinking plenty of fluids and eating nutritious food.

Learn your workplace protocols including the actions you need to take in the event that you or a family member contracts coronavirus or the flu. Make sure your responsibilities will be fulfilled, and you have a means of communication with your employer.

Learn the difference between cold, flu and coronavirus symptoms.

The symptoms are very similar between them.

Cold	Flu	Coronavirus
Slow onset	Sudden onset	Slow onset
Starts with sore and scratchy throat. Includes cough, runny/stuffy nose, and any fever is mild	More intense symptoms than cold. Includes high fever (over 100.5), extreme exhaustion, muscle/body aches, dry cough, chills. Symptoms can include runny/stuffy nose, headache and possibly vomiting and diarrhea (more common in children).	Symptoms include fever, cough and shortness of breath. A minority of cases develop pneumonia (more common in elderly and individuals with pre-existing medical conditions).

Learn what to do if you develop symptoms. Stay home except to get medical care. Call your doctor’s office prior to visiting them and discuss your symptoms. They may ask you to wear a mask when you come to an appointment. Avoid close proximity to others to prevent spread.

Contact your child’s school or childcare center to learn about their emergency plan. Inform your child of these plans to help your child prepare and to avoid additional fears.

Be active in your neighborhood. Learn your neighbors’ plans and communicate your plans to them. Encourage your neighborhood to establish a communication system to remain informed about those who are homebound and may need your help to pick up groceries or medicine for them.

3. Create a Plan

If you or a family member are showing symptoms, you will want to implement your plan of action. Your plan needs to be realistic and concise and minimally include:

- Stay home when you are sick and keeping sick children home from school.
- Encourage individuals who are showing symptoms to not get into close contact with others.
- If possible, designate one person as the caretaker for all who have symptoms.
- Do not share items such as toothpaste, drinking glasses, utensils, etc.
- Wash the thermometer after every use.
- Stay in contact with your employer with updates on your status.
- Identify one family member as a main contact for friends, neighbors and employers.
- Designate one area in the home for family members showing symptoms.

4. Prepare a Kit

Put together a kit of basic supplies for household members for two weeks in the event of quarantine or if stores are closed. Include the following items in your kits:

- Supply of water and food (canned and dried foods)
- Manual can opener
- Toilet paper and facial tissues
- Alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol for wiping surfaces
- Medicines (prescription and pain relievers, such as Tylenol)
- Thermometer
- Cleaning supplies (both home and personal care)
- Extra hand soap
- Battery powered radio
- Battery powered flashlight
- Extra batteries
- First aid kit
- List of emergency contacts
- Supplies for your pet (extra food, litter, water, carrier, leash)
- Any additional supplies for special needs
- Extra cash to pay for deliveries from family and friends

5. Listen for Information

When a pandemic occurs, health and public officials distribute information via mass media outlets. Information will include status of virus spread, preventive techniques, availability of health care facilities, vaccines, and antiviral medications. Make sure that the sources are reputable, listen to the information, and follow the suggestions offered.

6. Protect

Protect yourself and your family by using safe hygiene methods

Wash your hands often with soap and warm water and scrub your hands together for 20 seconds, or the time it takes to sing “Happy Birthday” twice. Tired of “Happy Birthday”? Sing your favorite song.

Use hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available. Use enough sanitizer so your hands are still wet after rubbing them together for 20 seconds.

Cover your cough with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. If a tissue is not available, cough or sneeze into your elbow.

Have trash bins with lids available for paper towels and tissues.

Use cleansers and disinfectants at work and home.

Practice social distancing by avoiding crowded areas to prevent the spread of the virus.

7. Resources

American Red Cross: <https://www.redcross.org/about-us/news-and-events/news/2020/coronavirus-safety-and-readiness-tips-for-you.html>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

World Health Organization: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: <https://www.hhs.gov>

**Consult with a professional PAS counselor 24/7/365 by calling
800-356-0845**

**Additional resources are available on PAS website
www.paseap.com**