



Kick SARS in the CORONA: important steps all of us should take right now!

A 'living' guide – last updated on 13 March 2020:

Don't believe those that say Coronavirus is not serious. It really is.

Don't believe those who say we should panic either. **Panicking has never helped.**

You have the power to limit and delay the spread of this crippling new pandemic:

1. **Do not panic.**
2. See step number 1.
3. **Wash your hands!** All the time. Strap a hand sanitiser to your mobile phone (which you should also clean!) and use it frequently and liberally.
4. **Do not touch your face**, at least not before reaching for your hand sanitiser. This is much harder than it sounds, but if we help each other we can reduce subconscious potentially harmful habits.
5. **Social Distancing:** keep at least a healthy (literally) two metres of distance. Show your respect and appreciation by not touching each other. And give corona the boot when you greet, by tapping your feet.
6. **Limit all non-essential travel.** And we mean truly essential travel only. Work from home if you can. Encourage your employer to be bold and innovative in this regard. Cancel work or holiday travels, especially abroad.
7. **Limit or avoid any gatherings:** these include academic, commercial, cultural, faith-based, sporting & other social events; and the tourism, hospitality and entertainment industries. It is impossible to know who might be sick (or just becoming infectious), and the more people you come into contact with, the higher your risk of becoming infected.
8. **Protect those at greatest risk:** elderly and those with chronic diseases which make them more likely to be infected or have serious viral disease. This means steps like avoiding nursing/old age homes and caring for those who should completely limit their movement, e.g. offer to shop for your elderly neighbour, or family member on chemotherapy, or friend living with HIV.
9. **Stay at home when you are not feeling well.** Don't wait until you are sick, but self isolate as soon as you get any hint or feeling of something starting, even just a sniffle or a feeling of malaise. We call these 'prodromal' symptoms - most people will recognise the feeling of impending illness. It is not about showing how tough you are, but how much you care.
10. **Allow your employees and students to stay home if they need to be quarantined (i.e. at risk) or isolated (sick).** This will help your organisation more than it will help those who need to stay home.
11. **Under no circumstances discriminate against anybody who is ill, or who thinks they might be ill.** It is nobody's fault if they become sick, but it is everyone's problem. If we stigmatise this infection it will go underground and become so much harder to beat. #TB #HIV

12. **Get the new flu vaccine once it is available**, since it will reduce your chances of getting both infections at the same time (as has been documented for some patients).
13. Try to **live as healthily as possible**, including regular nutritious meals, as much sleep as possible and frequent exercise - ideally outdoors and away from other people – gyms are to be avoided.
14. **Fact check** all 'prevention remedies' or 'cures' circulated on social media – fake news is spreading faster than the virus. And just like with the virus your actions can help to stop it.
15. **If you think you may have coronavirus, or were exposed**, call the NICD hotline (in South Africa: 0800 029 999), or your local care provider and ask for advice. Always try to call any healthcare facility before you go there, if you think you might be contagious. This will help them prepare and respond more quickly to your needs. And remember step 11 if you receive such a call.
16. Your care provider will explain what is meant by **self isolation** in your context, but in brief: try to avoid all direct contact with others, i.e. stay in your own room/space and make your own food if it can't be made for you/delivered. If you live alone ask somebody else to do your essential shopping.
17. **Reduce non-urgent healthcare visits**, to limit strain on healthcare services.
18. **Plan** for the worst and hope for the best, e.g. make a list of who to call and where to go in case of an emergency.
19. **If we don't act together we will suffer together**. Even if you don't consider yourself to be at risk, you are. Why? Because if the already frail healthcare system becomes overrun, nobody will get the quality of care they need if they are sick or injured. None of us can predict when we may need urgent care, for whatever reason. The virus will rob us all of this option if the healthcare system collapses. #Iran #Italy
20. **Remember step 1!** This is not the first pandemic and it will not be the last. But we have a real opportunity to respond in a way we never have before. And together prevent suffering and death as never before.

"It always seems impossible, until it is done." Madiba

Sources of credible information on COVID-19:

South Africa: Phone the National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD) toll free 24/7 on 0800 029 999 or visit their website: <http://www.nicd.ac.za/diseases-a-z-index/covid-19/>

This World Health Organization website has the latest global information:
<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/situation-reports>

Compiled by TB Proof and fellow public health and infectious disease professionals and activists:
original document here with full list of contributors: <http://www.tbproof.org/>
