



Understanding Social Distancing, Self-Quarantine, And Self-Isolation

Social Distancing

Social distancing is the first step in dealing with a pandemic such as the Coronavirus (COVID-19). By definition, social distancing is the act of deliberately putting a large amount of space between people in order to avoid spreading the virus. Ways to practice social distancing include:

- Stay at least six feet away from other people
- Stay in the house and avoid crowds
- Do not invite family or friends to your home or visit them in their home. Instead use electronic devices to stay connected
- Work from home instead of at the office whenever possible
- If you are mandated to work outside of your home, avoid public transportation if possible
- If you must use public transportation carry disinfecting wipes to clean seats and poles, sit at least 6 feet from other commuters, and wash your hands as soon as your commute is over
- Cancel or postpone any meetings or social gatherings
- If you need to grocery shop, go at a time when you suspect less people will be shopping such as late at night or early in the morning
- Make a checklist of foods that are shelf-stable or can be frozen to reduce the number of trips that you will need to make to the store while avoiding panic buying

Self-Quarantine

If you have been exposed to anyone diagnosed with COVID-19, you should self-quarantine for a minimum of 14 days according to current CDC guidelines. Self-quarantine includes the following practices:

- Stay in your home at all times and have no contact with others living outside of your home.
- Limit contact with those living in your home by staying at least 6 feet away from them at all times
- Cover coughs and sneezes with your upper sleeve or a tissue. Never cough in the direction of another person. Discard tissues immediately into a receptacle with a plastic liner.



- Practice standard hygiene and wash hands frequently with warm water and soap. Scrub hands vigorously for a full 20 seconds or the amount of time it takes to hum Happy Birthday twice.
- Do not share linens, dishes, utensils, or towels
- Be aware of the symptoms of COVID-19 which may appear between 2 to 14 days after exposure and contact your provider if you experience the following:
 - Tiredness
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath
 - High temperature > 101 F or a persistent high temperature greater than 103 F that does not respond to Tylenol

Self-Isolate

Self-Isolation occurs when a person has been diagnosed with COVID-19 and the symptoms are mild enough for the patient to be managed at home and not in the hospital. Self-isolation contains the basic elements of social distancing and self-quarantining along with additional guidance to protect the patient and those living in the same residence. Following are detailed recommendations for self-isolating:

1. Stay at home

This may sound obvious, but don't leave home except to get medical care (and if you do, make sure you have called ahead). Say no to visitors. Contact friends and family online or by phone. If you use online shopping for deliveries of food, medicine or other necessities, make sure delivery instructions say that items should be left outside, not handed over in person. If you ask friends or family for help bringing you supplies, get them to do the same.

2. Separate yourself from others

Stay in one room, with the door closed – ideally a room that has a window to the outside that you can open. Don't share crockery, cutlery, glasses, bedding or towels with anyone in your home when you have used them. Dishwashers can be used to clean crockery and cutlery. If that isn't possible, wash by hand and dry using a separate tea towel. Laundry, bedding and towels should be placed in a plastic bag and washed only when tests for COVID-19 are negative or self-isolation is over, if possible. Do not take anything to a laundrette. If you must wash at home, use temperatures of at least 60C.



3. Food and bathrooms

Have meals left outside your door. If you cook for yourself, do so, if possible, when others are not in the kitchen – and take food back to your room to eat. If you have more than one bathroom in your home, use a separate one. If you must share, ensure you clean it thoroughly and regularly. If you live in shared accommodation (such as university halls of residence), leave your room only when necessary, ideally wearing a mask, if you have one. Try to avoid using the kitchen or bathroom while others are there.

4. Keep away from pets if possible

Wash your hands before and after contact as a precautionary measure.

5. Safely dispose of tissues after you cough or sneeze

Dispose of them into a plastic bag and immediately wash your hands with soap and water, and dry thoroughly. If you have one, wear a mask when you are in the same room as others, or if you go out for medical treatment.

6. Hand washing

The rules are similar to those for all people – wash your hands often and thoroughly, using soap and water, for 20 seconds. Then rinse and dry thoroughly. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands. Twenty seconds is the approximate amount of time it takes to hum the song Happy Birthday twice.

7. Waste disposal

All waste that you have been in contact with, including used tissues and masks, should be put in a plastic rubbish bag and tied when full. The plastic bag should then be placed in a second bin bag and tied. Do not dispose of it or put it out for collection until you have test results, or until isolation is over. You will get instructions on how to dispose of the waste.

8. If symptoms worsen

Seek medical help quickly if you develop new symptoms or if your symptoms worsen (for example, if you have problems breathing).