YOUR ONE-STOP COMMON SENSE SAFETY GUIDE

COVID-19

Facts to ease decision making and heighten safety **July 2020**

- Fear, anxiety and politics about COVID-19 have led to ***rumors and confusion*** about safety measures, risk factors, testing, and treatment.
- While much is still unknown about the virus, ***it is clear that prevention is the best defense***.
- We all have a role to play in "flattening the curve," which means ***reducing the number of cases at any given time*** so hospitals and medical facilities have enough room, equipment and staff members to treat people who are sick.

TRUST IN PREVENTION:

You may be infected with COVID-19 ***even if you do not feel sick***—this is called being *asymptomatic*. Simple things can keep ourselves ***and others*** healthy, ***even if you have completed quarantine or tested negative for the virus***.

- Wear a mask in public places.
- Stay *at least* six feet away from others—understanding that this may not be far enough if someone is sneezing, coughing, yelling or singing.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available—but understand sanitizer is not as effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, mouth and mask with unwashed hands.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash. If you do not have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow.
- Disinfecting frequently touched surfaces may prove helpful.

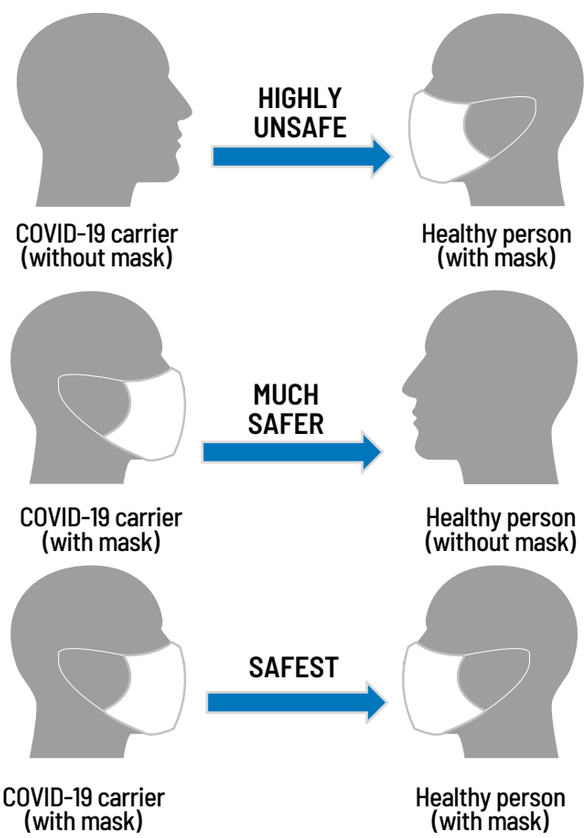
TRUST IN THESE TRUTHS, NOT MYTHS AND MEMES:

- Today ***NO vaccine OR treatment*** can prevent or cure COVID-19. Developing a safe and effective vaccine and deploying it widely may take many months or years.
- Even if you have had COVID-19, there ***is*** a chance you can become re-infected; and even after completing a period of quarantine or isolation you may be contagious—so continue taking precautions!
- Masks are unlikely to cause any problem with breathing (children under age 2 should not wear masks). If concerned, speak to your doctor.
- DO NOT inject, swallow, bathe in, or rub your body with bleach, disinfectant or rubbing alcohol. Doing so could cause serious harm, or even death.
- Drinking lots of cold drinks or gargling hot drinks, rinsing your nose with saline, or ingesting certain foods, spices, vitamins, essential oils, or supplements has NO proven effect on preventing or treating the virus.
- Hot weather (or saunas or steam baths) or cold weather have not slowed the COVID-19 pandemic.

Masks are no Myth

40% *of transmissions happen BEFORE a carrier shows symptoms. You wear a mask to protect OTHERS; they wear a mask to protect YOU. Recent research shows the level of protection against COVID-19 depends on factors such as the amount of virus shed by the carrier, distance between people, type of mask, and fit of the mask. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends a snug-fitting cloth mask. Learn more* ***here.***

RISK ONE MAY TRANSMIT COVID-19 TO OTHERS:



Sources: CDC, Johns Hopkins University, WHO

"We are not defenseless against COVID-19. *Cloth face coverings are one of the most powerful weapons we have to slow and stop the spread of the virus—particularly when used universally within a community setting. All Americans have a responsibility to protect themselves, their families, and their communities."*

Dr. Robert R. Redfield, CDC Director

LEAH'S STORY

After weeks mostly staying home, Leah meets her friends Justin, Benny and Marcus for a drink at a local gastropub. She becomes the latest person to begin a troubling COVID-19 journey. The others share similar stories of unknowingly spreading the virus.

JUSTIN, 24

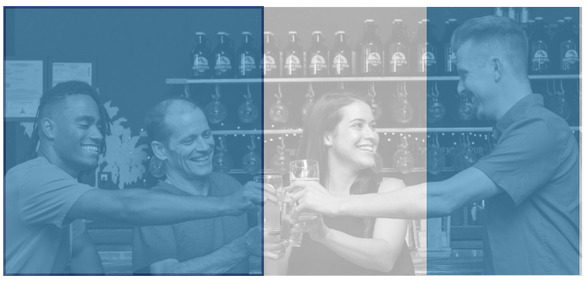
Justin is embarrassed about wearing a mask around friends. He plans to visit his grandmother later this week.

BENNY, 26

Benny took his mask off upon seeing that none of his friends wore one. Benny lives with his mother, a younger brother, and an elderly aunt.

MARCUS, 23

Marcus nearly opted out of meeting with his friends because he woke this morning with a sore throat. He has no idea he's been infected with COVID-19 for almost a week.



LEAH, 22

Leah has repeatedly heard 20-somethings seldom experience significant health issues. She leaves her mask in her handbag.

DAY 3: Leah attends a cookout and infects three family members.

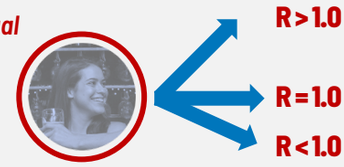
DAY 5: Leah has a business meeting and infects two colleagues.

DAY 8: Leah has a fever and chills and cannot taste or smell her food. She goes in for a COVID-19 test and returns home to quarantine.

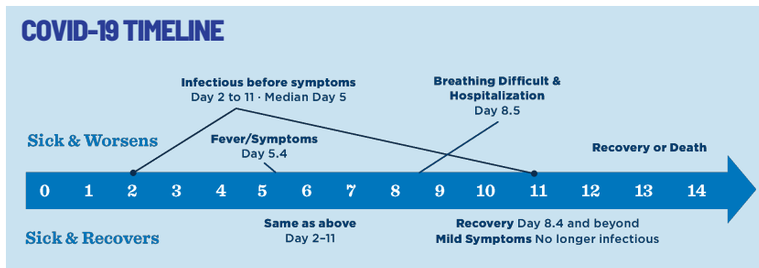
R Number a Key Factor in Gauging COVID-19

R refers to the "effective reproduction number." It's a way of measuring an infectious disease's capacity to spread. The R number signifies the average number of people to whom one infected person can pass the virus. An R value of 1 is a crucial threshold.

If each infected individual (such as Leah) infects more than one other person (R>1.0), the virus grows exponentially.



Together, WE determine the direction of the virus



*This timeline reflects a **typical** clinical course. The incubation period, severity of illness and other factors can vary greatly and may change the course and timing of an infection.*

FAST FACT:

*Physical and mental wellbeing, preventive care, and optimal management of chronic conditions are as important—**perhaps more important**—during the pandemic. Also, do not delay in calling 9-1-1 for a suspected stroke, heart attack or other medical emergency.*

CARING FOR THOSE AT HIGHEST RISK OF DEATH:

- Currently, older adults (particularly over 65 years old), people living in nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and people with health risks or chronic or serious health conditions are at highest risk of death from COVID-19.
- Recent research suggests children 10 and over and adults spread the virus to others at the same rate.
- Most people getting COVID-19 are under 50 years old. Most of those dying are over 50. Therefore, it is likely that many of those over 50 are infected by younger people.

It's important for everyone to do their part to keep all of us safe, especially those most vulnerable.

TRUST IN EVIDENCE-BASED RESOURCES

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Coronavirus Facts and Guidance
- National Institutes for Health (NIH) Coronavirus Resource Page
- World Health Organization (WHO) Coronavirus Guidance and Advice
- National Alliance Action Brief: COVID-19: The Importance of Shared Decision-Making

The National Alliance is grateful for the clinical expertise provided by members of its National Medical Director Advisory Council:

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