

The Corona Virus

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The Corona virus (Covid-19) is a respiratory disease (attacks primarily the lungs) that is spreading rapidly throughout the world and the United States. It has appeared in more than 180 countries and regions. There have been more than 1,513,000 million total cases and 88,000 deaths associated with the virus in the world (John Hopkins, April 8, 2020). The United States has the highest number of cases of 429,052 with 14,695 deaths. There are 2,726 cases and 80 deaths in Arizona (Daily Star, April 8, 2020). Of those, there are 464 cases and 16 deaths in Pima County. The number of cases and deaths are expected to rise at a very rapid rate as more testings are done and people get the virus in the next 7 – 14 days. We will continue to see high numbers of cases (Hot Spots) in different states.

The virus spread by person to person through respiratory droplets (coughs, sneezes, and talks) and contaminated surfaces or objects (e.g., money, credit cards, gas pump handles, steering wheels, shopping carts, doorknobs, light switches, phones, tablets, touch screens, remote controls, keyboards, handles, tables, counter tops, toilets, and sinks). People with the highest risks are persons 65-year-old or older who have more than one serious underlying medical conditions (e.g., chronic lung disease, cardiovascular disease, cancer, and diabetes), have immunocompromised conditions, and/or take immunosuppressive drugs. Those under 65-year-old with the above risk factors can also get the virus. A virus case can be mild – no symptoms, moderate – sick, but can recover at home, and severe – require hospitalization and/or result in death. Most people with the virus will recover. Anyone can be a virus carrier, regardless of age.

Currently, there is no Federal Drug Administration (FDA) approved drug specifically used for corona virus treatment and vaccine. Several drugs and vaccines are going through clinical trials at different stages. Normally, it takes several years to come up with a new drug or a vaccine. The FDA wants to make sure that they are safe for human use and effective in treating the corona virus and as a vaccine. There are doctors who are prescribing hydroxychloroquine (Plaquenil[®]) *under off label use* for the treatment of corona virus for selected patients, and the FDA authorizes *patient emergency use* of hydroxychloroquine by licensed practitioners.

There are several things you can do to reduce your chances of getting the corona virus. You need to practice physical and social distancing such as avoid close person to person contact by maintaining a distance of at least 6 feet and avoid crowds of people. There is a *stay-at-home* governor order in effect that requires residents to stay home unless they have an urgent need to go out for specific allowable purposes such as working at an essential service place and taking trips to grocery store, pharmacy, restaurant take out, and bank.

You need to avoid touching your nose, mouth, and eyes with uncleaned hands. Hands can be kept clean by frequently washing them thoroughly with soap and water or hand sanitizers that contains at least 60% alcohol. Potentially contaminated surfaces or objects need to be cleaned and disinfected often. If you do not have household disinfectants at home, you can make a bleach solution as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The CDC website describes how you can prepare the bleach solution. Before using a disinfectant, you need to clean the surface or object first. When using certain household disinfectants, there need to be adequate ventilation.

The CDC recommends that covering your mouth and nose with a cloth face cover when around people. I recommend that the face cover is made of two layers of cloth. The face cover is not a substitute for social distancing, but it provide additional protection against corona virus. The cloth face cover should be washed with hot water and soap after use. Additional recommendations include stay hydrated – drink plenty of water to wash away viruses in the oral cavity, get plenty of sleep and rest to build up your immune system, and avoid people who have the corona virus.

The CDC corona virus guidelines that should be followed can be found at the *Prevent Getting Sick* website. It is broken down into four areas: (1) How Coronavirus Spreads, (2) How to Protect Yourself, (3) Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Home, and (4) Cloth Face Covers. The link is <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/index.html>. It is worth the time to review the information provided by the CDC. There is a lot of useful information.

If you are thinking of getting tested for the corona virus, you should take the CDC *Self-Checker* first. This is the link: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/testing.html>. The *Self-Checker* website can help you decide whether you should seek medical assistance.

There are unproven products being promoted and sold to prevent and treat the corona virus, to protect yourself against the virus, to disinfect surfaces and objects, and to test for the virus. These products include, but not limited to prescription drugs, over-the-counter drugs, herbs, home remedies, personal protected clothing and equipment, hand sanitizers, disinfectants, and virus corona testing kits. Before purchasing and using these items, you need to make sure they work.

Stay-at-home does not mean being totally isolated socially. You can stay in contact with family, friends, neighbors, and co-workers by phone, FaceTime, Skype, Zoom, emailing, cell phone texting, and writing letters, postcards, and notecards. There are other innovative ways to stay in contact with loved ones (e.g., nursing home residents see their loved ones through the window and talk to them by phone; older parents stay in their front yard see and talk to their children and grandchildren in the car parked on the street; or neighbors talking to each other while staying in their yards).

There are many ways to reduce the depression/anxiety feeling associated with the corona virus crisis. Every day, you should make at least one person laugh by telling a bad joke or share a corona virus cartoon such as imagine a senior citizen pushing a grocery cart with a mountain of toilet paper rolls to the parking lot being escorted by two-armed guards. You should go outside for a few minutes every day to enjoy the sunshine and get some fresh air. To reduce boredom, you should establish regular routine to complete weekly tasks (e.g., decide on how many times you are going to clean and disinfect potential contaminated surfaces or objects in the home). You should exercise 150 minutes at moderate exertion level during the week (e.g., 5 times at 30 minutes or 3 times at 50 minutes) inside the house. If you are exercising outside, you need to practice social distancing.

Be safe, and stay healthy, calm, and positive.