

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES / DISASTER RELIEF COMMITTEE

TRISTATE METROPOLITAN DISASTER RELIEF

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We are pleased to provide for households a list of frequently asked questions and answers related to the COVID-19 outbreak. On this subject you may find it helpful to review the article entitled "Disease—How to Reduce the Risk" in the *Awake!* No. 6 of 2016. ([Awake! No. 6 of 2016](#)) You might also regularly review guidelines provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) or other reputable agencies. Information from the CDC can be found at the following link: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>. Thank you. Your brothers, COVID-19—TriState Metro Disaster Relief Committee.

Question: What can I do to help protect the health and safety of myself and others?

Answer: Stay home as much as possible.

The CDC states that "the best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus." It further states that "the virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person" between "people who are in close contact with one another." Therefore, for the safety of yourself and others, consider keeping physically separate from those not living inside your home to the degree possible, limiting any activity outside your home to only essential matters that affect the life of you or those in your household. The CDC also recommends that you "clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily."

Question: If I must go out in public, what specific precautions can I take?

Answer: Maintain social distancing and clean your hands frequently.

Limiting the frequency of going out in public is the best option. However, when doing so is necessary, the CDC recommends putting "distance between yourself and other people." Social distancing involves maintaining at least 6 feet of separation between you and those not living in your home with you, including when standing in lines. In addition, be conscious of touch surfaces and avoid touching your face. The CDC further recommends cleaning your hands often. Frequently wash your hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds. Alcohol-based hand sanitizer may be used in addition to hand washing or if soap and water are not readily available.

Question: Should I wear a face mask? If so, what type should be used?

Answer: A face covering is recommended in public settings.

*The CDC recommends "wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g., grocery stores and pharmacies) **especially** in areas of significant community-based transmission," and further states that "Cloth face coverings fashioned from household items or made at home from common materials at low cost can be used as an additional, voluntary public health measure." The CDC also suggests that during this time of shortage "surgical masks or N-95 respirators be reserved for healthcare workers and other medical first responders."*

Question: If I have an older family member who has decided to shelter in place, what should I bear in mind when deciding whether or not to visit with them in person?

Answer: Keep visits in person to only those that are absolutely necessary.

This can be a difficult decision, but as stated above, avoiding physical contact is one of the best ways to protect others. Where physical separation is completely unavoidable, for their protection, vulnerable persons should wear a mask or face covering whenever they are in contact with another person that is not in their household. In addition, any visitor should also wear a face covering, sanitize their hands before entering, and sanitize any areas they touched before leaving.

Question: What should I do if I learn I had close contact with a person known to or presumed to have the virus or I am experiencing cold or flu-like symptoms?

Answer: The course of wisdom is to self-quarantine.

The purpose is to create separation of a person or group of people to prevent the possible spread of the disease. While quarantined, you should regularly monitor your health for flu-like symptoms. If you begin having symptoms, the CDC further recommends that those with symptoms “stay in a specific “sick room” if possible, and away from other people and pets in your home.” You may choose to monitor yourself for fever by taking your temperature twice a day. Remain alert for fever, cough, or difficulty breathing. Regarding when to seek medical attention, the CDC states the following:

*“If you develop **emergency warning signs** for COVID-19 get **medical attention immediately.** Emergency warning signs include*:*

- *Trouble breathing*
- *Persistent pain or pressure in the chest*
- *New confusion or inability to arouse*
- *Bluish lips or face*

**This list is not all inclusive. Please consult your medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning.”*

Question: What if I am faced with a medical emergency?

Answer: Be sure to have your executed DPA card, the contact information for your health-care agents, a list of your current medications and any health issues, and a means to contact others.

Due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, many hospitals are not allowing patients to be accompanied during admission or to receive visitors. Since this significantly limits the help that family members and friends can provide in person, it is wise for each publisher to have a properly completed durable power of attorney (DPA) card and the ability to phone or videoconference their health-care agents, family members, and elders using electronic means, such as FaceTime, Skype, and Zoom.

Updating your previously executed DPA card is only necessary if your health-care agents are no longer available or your health-care wishes have changed. If you need to execute a DPA card, endeavor to do so in a manner that does not compromise your health or violate social distancing directives. In most places, the DPA card must be signed in the presence of two adults. The requirements for these two adult witnesses are found in the “Statement of Witnesses” section of your DPA card. Please note that the two witnesses do not need to be Jehovah’s Witnesses. Along with your executed DPA card, have the following:

- *A list of current medications, if any*
- *A written statement of known health issues*
- *Contact information for:*
 1. *Health-care agents*
 2. *Emergency contact person(s)*
 3. *Congregation elder(s)*

Question: How can I make the wisest use of my time?

Answer: “Make sure of the more important things.”—Phil. 1:10

*While it is good to keep up-to-date, bear in mind that excessive viewing of sensational news reports about the impact of COVID-19 can have a negative impact. Additionally, it is **vital** to maintain a good spiritual routine. (Phil. 4:6-8; Matt. 6:33, 34; Isa. 41:10) Regarding managing stress related to this outbreak, The Awake! No.1 of 2020 has additional helpful guidelines that would be good to consider. ([Awake! No.1 of 2020](#))*

Your brothers,

*COVID-19 – TriState Metro
Disaster Relief Committee*