

The

# Liker Health Report



Keeping People Focused on Staying Fit & Healthy

Spring 2020

## Staying Healthy In Uncertain Times

### *Hygiene and Social Distancing are Key in Preventing COVID-19*

Hand washing, when done correctly, is the single most effective way to prevent the spread of communicable diseases. Unfortunately, it is often easier said than done, but the current COVID-19 outbreak necessitates that we heed the warning. The one certainty about COVID-19 is that it is extremely contagious and without “herd immunity,” everyone -- not just the elderly or infirmed -- appear to be at risk of contracting this respiratory illness. Hands are problematic appendages because they inevitably lead to touching of the mouth, nose, and eyes whose mucous membranes permit viruses (and other pathogens) to directly enter the body and potentially cause havoc in the lungs. And although the human immune system is normally quite effective at destroying pathogens, it can become overwhelmed even in individuals who have seemingly robust health.

Individuals can experience a COVID-19 infection that varies from mild to deadly, and even if someone successfully recovers, he or she may have permanent lung damage. What makes any acute respiratory illness deadly is the “cytokine storm” which is induced by overwhelming inflammation initiated by the immune system. Inflammation is the body’s way of fighting off infections caused by invading pathogen(s) and it is highly beneficial -- most of the time. It’s the reason people recover from a bout of food poisoning, a cut finger, or the common cold. But with this novel coronavirus, it is as if the immune system is so efficient that it not only kills the virus but the patient as well.

Preventing the spread of COVID-19 will take a concerted effort as will maintaining an optimally functioning immune system. Begin with proper hand washing; avoid touching the face; practice social distancing (minimum 6 feet); get adequate sleep so the body’s nightly self-recovery cycle occurs; eat nutritiously and avoid high-sugar foods; engage in light to moderate physical activity, and practice stress management as much as possible.

### **PROPER HAND WASHING TECHNIQUES**

1. Wet your hands with warm running water.
2. Add soap and rub hands together to make a soapy lather. Do this away from the running water for at least 10-20 seconds, being careful not to wash the lather away. Wash the front and back of your hands, as well as between your fingers and under your nails. Try singing “Happy Birthday” once or twice while washing.
3. Rinse your hands well under warm running water. Let the water run back into the sink, not down to your elbows.
4. Dry your hands thoroughly.

#### **If You Use a PUBLIC Restroom or a SHARED Sink:**

Dry hands with a clean paper towel; turn off the water with a clean paper towel and dispose in a receptacle. Use another clean paper towel to open the restroom door and dispose of it properly.

#### **If You ONLY Have Access to Alcohol-Based Hand Sanitizers:**

These products should be used only when soap and water are not readily available. To use correctly, apply approximately 1 teaspoon of gel on the palm of one hand. Rub gel all over both hands, rubbing the front, back and fingernail areas. Continue rubbing until hands are dry, about 30 seconds. Wash your hands with soap and water as soon as you have access to them.

# Self-Quarantine

## Protecting Those Who Are Not Infected

It's vital and time-sensitive to create a family plan should you or someone in your home begin to show symptoms of COVID-19. Begin by designating one room in the house, typically a bedroom with an en-suite (or nearest) bathroom, that will serve as the infected person's sole environment for the quarantine duration. All sleeping, eating, and daily activity should take place here. A room with a window is preferable for receiving sunshine and fresh air. If the person must leave the designated room to go outside, he or she should wear a face mask, maintain 6 feet of separation with others, and not touch any door handles or other surfaces.

If this ideal scenario is not completely doable, families should take additional precautions by sanitizing the home as much as possible. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends disinfecting frequently touched surfaces on a daily basis with either an EPA-registered household disinfectant, a 70% or greater alcohol solution, or a diluted household bleach solution (*see dilution guidelines*). This includes doorknobs, light switches, cabinet handles, tables, desks, phones, keyboards, sinks, faucet handles, and toilets. Any dirty surfaces should be cleaned with a detergent or soap and water before disinfecting.

Currently, the self-quarantine period is the same as the virus' incubation period (14 days), but always follow the recommendation of your physician. Anyone who lives alone and is self-quarantining due to COVID-19 symptoms may receive food and other deliveries if these are left at the door -- no direct contact with the delivery person. If emergency medical services are necessary, tell the 9-1-1 operator you have symptoms.

Anyone who is non-symptomatic but under "shelter in place" orders: Take precautions if you go outside and follow health guidelines issued by local, city, or state officials. Regularly check the CDC's website for current information ([www.cdc.gov/coronavirus](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)).

### Household Bleach Dilution

- ✓ Mix 5 tablespoons (1/3 cup) of bleach per gallon of water OR
- ✓ Mix 4 teaspoons of bleach per quart of water

#### Remember:

- ✓ Use adequate ventilation when disinfecting
- ✓ Use unexpired bleach.
- ✓ Never mix bleach with ammonia.

**Fear is a reaction. Courage is a decision.**

**Sir Winston Churchill**

## Dear Patients...



As a physician for 28 years, I realize not only the importance of being physically healthy, but the significant impact that mental health has on one's physical health. In these unsettling times, I encourage everyone to devote time and energy to their mental health. This is especially important if you find yourself symptomatic and in self-quarantine, caring for a loved one who is ill, or simply sheltering in place with a family of any size ("cabin fever" is real).

Fear of the unknown can be stressful for anyone, so fortifying your mindset is just as important as fortifying your body. Focus on family, friends, neighbors, and co-workers with regular calls, text messages, emails, or video chats. Live each day with gratitude and love. Listen to your favorite music, sing, watch an old movie from your childhood, meditate, practice yoga, or start a journal. And if you feel overwhelmed, please reach out to someone and simply talk about your feelings. Talking can sometimes be the best medicine.

We are all in this together. We need to take personal responsibility for our actions and make the necessary sacrifices so that we can protect ourselves and our broader community. The choices each of us makes could save a life. Stay safe.

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