



Reducing COVID-19 Exposure Risk–Everyday Living Recommendations and Protocols

While we know most of you have been following the stay-at-home orders and other directions to reduce COVID-19 exposure risk, here are our everyday living recommended protocols moving forward over the weeks ahead:

1. Treat everyone you don't know well as a potential carrier

That means anyone who unintentionally – or intentionally – doesn't practice the 6 feet separation rule.

2. Enter the grocery store as a ninja warrior

- Wear disposable gloves when touching the cart, basket, product, or credit/debit keypad. Now is not the time to handle produce to find the perfectly ripe avocado or apple. Wash all fruit, vegetables and similar ready-to-eat foods well before consuming. Wash it like you know it has pesticide on it.
 - If you don't have gloves for use at the grocery store use tissue, towel or even winter gloves as a last resort. Rotate winter gloves and hang them in the sunlight on the clothes line after use if you're able. Wash hands after removing your gloves!
- Interactions with grocery store employees should follow the 6 foot minimum separation rule. They are true heroes doing absolutely critical work but they also cross paths with the public at large. Their work is stressful for them at this time. Extend your sincere thanks but, sadly, give them the space they deserve.
- After considering transmission via person-to-person (from friends and acquaintances), the next riskiest interaction is public touch surfaces (keypads, handles and knobs in high traffic public places)
 - Control risk of exposure from a surface by properly using gloves and then properly disposing of those gloves. Then, handwash and/or hand sanitizer. Avoid common public touch surfaces whenever possible.
- Visit the grocery store during off peak hours when customer traffic is low.

3. Stay within your family group – this one is important!

Family groups of 1, 2, 3 or more who are virus free can remain virus free if they don't physically interact outside that group and they avoid the risky public touch surfaces. The risk arises when one member of one isolated group interacts with a separate, outside group or individual. It just takes one person to be the bridge of virus transmission from one group to another.

Isolated, insular groups is the single best way to significantly reduce the person-to-person risk.



4. Check in with friends and family

This is an important time to check in with friends and family, particularly those isolated or alone. Phone calls, skyping, Facetime etc. are important tools to provide connection and emotional support. But remember that your 80-year-old parent or grandparent doesn't need to talk endlessly about the virus and the news. Instead, talk to them about the emerging pinkletinks and daffodils. This is a great time to talk about the weather! Think upbeat not downbeat to help our most vulnerable family and neighbors through this crisis.

If, after following ALL of the protocols, you get sick:

It may not be the coronavirus but be careful with that assumption! Stay calm.

We know that a huge majority of cases never need face-to-face medical attention and, in fact, weather the illness safely and successfully at home.

BUT, if you believe you have the virus, you should immediately isolate into a bedroom with an unshared bathroom **and contact your primary care physician via telephone. Follow the guidance of your health care professional.** Use room service to your bedroom door if you have a family member or roommate in the house. And DO NOT roam about the house if others are living with you.

Remember, hay fever season is beginning, so some unrelated similar symptoms are predictable and seasonal.

For more information, go to these websites:

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/maintaining-emotional-health-well-being-during-the-covid-19-outbreak>

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/frequently-asked-questions-about-covid-19>

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-prevention-and-treatment>