

# COVID-19 WWAD

Recommendations from Stephen Ralph, MD | March 1, 2020

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/index.html>

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- Learn to use VA Video Connect through the VA mobile app store or by contacting your VA care team, before any urgent problems arise. For non-VA patients, there are numerous telemedicine services with online MDs
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. An easy way to mark the time is to hum the “Happy Birthday” song from beginning to end twice while scrubbing.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol
- **Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.**
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Stay home when you are sick or becoming sick
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue (not your hands) and throw the tissue in lined trash can
- **Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces**, especially work surfaces daily. Start getting in the habit of washing hands often and “not touching your hands nose or mouth with unwashed hands”, at least outside your home. Although not in pdf, I would add **wipe down your grocery packages after your home with a disinfectant wipe**; many hands touched that package before you
- Getting a flu shot is recommended
- Changing the focus from “keeping them from infecting us” over to “keeping us from infecting each other” Among new messages that should be delivered are:
- Build up a reserve of nonperishable food and extra prescription medications, incase homebound.
- Consider care of sick family members (parents)
- Cross-training work personnel so one person’s absence won’t derail an organization’s ability to function.

## **SYMPTOMS INCLUDE FEVER, COUGH, AND SHORTNESS OF BREATH, PREDOMINATELY LOWER RESPIRATORY**

A differentiation from influenza “flu” are prominent chest symptoms of shortness of breath but cough nonproductive, and a low oxygen saturation and bilateral interstitial infiltrates on chest x-ray signifying an “interstitial pneumonia”. This picture can be blurred and become more critical in patients with COPD/emphysema and in asthmatics. These individuals and the frail, immunocompromised, or with significant congestive heart failure should avoid large gatherings and crowded waiting rooms. Supermarket shop during quieter early morning hours and clean those cart handles; consider shopping online with curbside pickup might be appropriate. A family member may need assistance with ordering, but that can be done from anywhere. Anticipate closures/ disruption of schools/daycare etc.