



**COVID-19 (novel Coronavirus)**

**Frequently Asked Questions**

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**Covenant Church**

## Contributors

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## GENERAL INFORMATION

### 1. What is Coronavirus (COVID-19)?

Coronavirus is a known family of viruses, and COVID-19 is a type of coronavirus which presents mainly as a respiratory illness, and can spread easily from person to person.

### 2. Why is there such concern about the spread of this virus, and how concerned should I be for me and my family?

COVID-19 only recently became a human pathogen, and scientists have had less than 3 months to study its behavior. Concern arises from these facts:

- COVID-19 is about 2 times more contagious than the flu
- Because of its apparently long incubation period, COVID-19 moves through human populations more slowly, making its spread more “covert.”
- COVID-19 has a much higher fatality rate

## **PREVENTION**

### **1. Are there certain people who are at greater risk for infection?**

Yes. Symptoms can be much more severe in anyone over the age of 60, or anyone of any age whose immune system has been compromised, or who have serious chronic medical conditions. Those with heart disease, lung disease, diabetes, chronic kidney disease, or smokers are all at greater risk.

### **2. What are the best ways to help protect myself and my family?**

Stay home when you are sick. Cover all coughing and sneezing with your sleeve or a tissue, as this virus is transmitted *mostly* by respiratory droplets. Keep about 6 feet of “social distancing” from others. Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly. Avoid touching your hands to your face.

Frequently clean “high touch” surfaces (phones, door handles, light switches, etc) If you use hand sanitizer, make sure the brand you use contains at least 60% alcohol. Avoid all non-essential travel, including any travel requiring a plane. Most especially, avoid cruise ships at this time.

### **3. Is it safe to travel?**

We highly discourage travel to Asia, Europe, or the Middle East at this time. Travel within the United States should be done with caution. Modes of travel that require closeness to others is more risky, and should be avoided when possible. The safest mode of transportation at this time is your own automobile. Whatever your plans, consider your own health, the health risks to those in your household, and the importance of your travel.

### **4. I have seen that there is a high demand for surgical masks. Do these help?**

Currently, there is no need to wear a surgical mask to protect yourself, unless your health care professional recommends it. The intention of a surgical mask is to block infected respiratory droplets from entering the nose/mouth of another. Masks are most effective in covering the coughing or sneezing of an individual who is infected. The exception to this is if you are caring for a sick individual who themselves is, for whatever reason, unable to wear a surgical mask.

### **5. Is there any additional cleaning I should do in my home?**

Though viruses cannot survive long-term except inside live tissue, we do not yet know precisely how long the novel coronavirus can survive outside of tissue. The disinfecting suggestions made above should be done frequently. Additionally, lists of recommended commercial disinfectants are available online, or you can make your own by mixing 4 teaspoons chlorine bleach in 1

quart of water. **Please remember not to mix bleach and ammonia!** If you live with a family member at higher risk, more vigilance may be needed. Remove and wash any potentially contaminated clothing upon entering your home, remove your shoes at the door, and take a shower immediately after returning home to remove potential contamination from your hair and skin. If your work requires high exposure environments (such as a physician or nurse, real-estate agent, or teacher) then coming home to a high-risk family member puts them in a higher risk still. These extra steps can help ensure greater protection.

## TREATMENT

### 1. If I or my loved-one is diagnosed, what happens next?

The typical symptoms of COVID-19 are a fever over 100.4 Fahrenheit, cough, and shortness of breath. If you experience all of these symptoms it is imperative to communicate immediately with your health care provider. **Do not proceed to the doctor until you have first called them for further instructions!** They will want to be prepared for your arrival. Upon diagnosis, you will be asked to self-quarantine, and will be advised to rest, drink plenty of water, and use over-the-counter symptom relievers for reducing pain, fever, and muscle aches.

### 2. If I or someone in my family contracts COVID-19, what can we expect to experience, and how long does it generally last?

Patients with confirmed COVID-19 should remain in self-quarantine until the risk of secondary transmission to others is thought to be low. This decision is made on a case-by-case basis, in consultation with healthcare providers, and state and local health departments. 97-99% of infected people will recover at home, usually within 10 days. Pneumonia is the most frequent serious problem, and should be suspected if someone has marked shortness of breath, in which case you should proceed immediately to the nearest Emergency Room.

### 3. Are there any supplies I should stock up on in case of a quarantine?

We recommend being prepared with at least a 2-week supply of food and other necessary supplies. This includes tissues, essential toiletries, and cleaning supplies (dish and laundry detergent, pet supplies, OTC and prescription medications, etc.) Additionally, it will be helpful to have cash on hand for a week should you not be able to use bank cards and credit cards for purchases of gas, food, etc.. Keep gas in your vehicles, and a month's supply of

medication if possible. Other health supplies you may want to have on hand are pain relievers, stomach remedies, cough and cold medicines, fluids and electrolytes and vitamins, and OTC medicines to reduce fever. **If you are in at-risk population and need any of these items, please contact the church and one of our team members will get these to you as soon as possible.**

## **RELIABLE INFORMATION**

### **1. I've been watching the news, and things seem really scary. Is there a fully reliable source of information I can access on this virus?**

The most reliable sources are those concerned with scientific accuracy. We recommend the following:

For information specifically on COVID-19 [www.coronavirus.gov](http://www.coronavirus.gov)

The Centers for Disease Control [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

The World Health Organization [www.who.int](http://www.who.int)

The Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health [www.jhsph.edu](http://www.jhsph.edu)

## **CHURCH PARTICIPATION**

### **1. Is it safe to attend church services?**

Covenant leadership is encouraging our people to practice social distancing. This week, the elders are discussing how we can continue to “be the church” while taking some necessary measures that are unprecedented in our lifetimes. This is difficult for us all. But it is important to note that it cannot be guaranteed that no one at Covenant is already infected. Therefore, and regardless of what “on campus” events are determined to be “safe,” if you are part of an “at-risk” population, it is safest that you avoid groups of people, and that would include Sunday worship services. We understand that this is a very difficult thing, but given what we know about the spread of this virus, it is the best decision you can make. Please stay home and you can watch us online. The cancellation of all “in person” worship will not affect our online presence, so everyone can watch us here. [www.covenantexperience.com/live-stream](http://www.covenantexperience.com/live-stream) Please call Covenant offices if you are self-quarantined. Our pastors, deacons, and staff will want to pray for you, and stand ready to serve you in any tangible way that is helpful.

## **2. What is “social distancing?”**

Social distancing is deliberately increasing the physical space between people to avoid spreading illness. Staying at least six feet away from other people lessens your chances of catching COVID-19.

Other examples of social distancing that allow you to avoid larger crowds or crowded spaces are:

- Working from home instead of at the office
- Closing schools or switching to online classes
- Visiting loved ones by electronic devices instead of in person
- Cancelling or postponing conferences and large meetings

## **3. If/When we come to Covenant, are there additional precautions you would recommend that I and my family should take?**

Even in smaller gathering like small groups of less than 10 people, it is important to practice social distancing, and exercise all the other precautions that have been advised above. As always, if you don't feel well, or have been in contact with a sick family member, you should stay home for your safety and the safety of others.