

Course Bundle Series

Understanding and Coping with the

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SESSION ONE: COURSE OVERVIEW

COURSE OVERVIEW

The COVID-19 pandemic is affecting people around the world, resulting in health care systems being overwhelmed, people being confined to their homes, restrictions on travel, and the closure of businesses and industries. Because of this, many people are struggling with uncertainty and fear.

This course aims to combat this by helping people understand the situation, and what they can do to protect themselves and others, while looking after their mental wellness.

This course contains the best information available at the time of writing, as the situation is changing rapidly. Different areas and countries are responding to this pandemic in different ways. Be mindful of directives in your area.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of this workshop, you will be able to:

- Understand what COVID-19 is and how it spreads
- Know how to protect yourself during this pandemic
- Understand what self-isolation and self-quarantine mean and how to comply
- Know what to do if you become sick
- Learn about psychological reactions to the situation
- Learn ways to manage stress and anxiety caused by the situation
- Learn proper techniques for washing hands, using hand sanitizer, using masks, and cleaning and disinfecting
- Recognize reliable sources of information about the pandemic

PRE-COURSE ASSESSMENT

1. True or False: COVID-19 is a coronavirus.
 2. True or False: A pandemic is the worldwide spread of a new disease.
 3. True or False: The best way to protect yourself from contracting COVID-19 is to listen to advice on social media.
 4. True or False: It is normal to feel sad, stressed, confused, scared or angry during a crisis.
 5. True or False: If you become sick, you should go directly to the hospital.
 6. True or False: Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, tiredness, wet cough.
 7. True or False: COVID-19 is spread from person to person through small droplets from the nose or mouth.
 8. True or False: You should wash your hands for 20 seconds to properly wash them.
 9. True or False: Singing the Happy Birthday song will last approximately 20 seconds.
 10. True or False: The World Health Organization is a trusted source of information about the COVID-19 pandemic.
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SESSION TWO: WHAT IS COVID-19?

To understand what is expected during this time of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important to first know about this illness.

In this session, we will define COVID-19, learn its symptoms, and learn how it spreads.

WHAT IS IT?

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines COVID-19 as an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus.

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that can cause illness in people. Others only infect animals. In rare cases, animal coronaviruses infect people and then spread from human to human. It is suspected that this is what happened with COVID-19.

Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) are examples of coronaviruses that originated in animals and then were transmitted to humans. SARS occurred in 2003 and was more deadly but less infectious than COVID-19. The WHO says no SARS outbreaks have occurred anywhere in the world since 2003. MERS was first identified in Saudi Arabia in 2012. The viruses that cause these other diseases are related genetically but the diseases they cause are different.

There are many other types of coronaviruses that commonly cause mild upper-respiratory tract illnesses such as the common cold.

Coronaviruses are named for the protein spikes that look like the points of a crown, which is corona in Latin.

COVID-19 was first detected in Wuhan City, in the province of Hubei in China, with the first infections linked to a live animal market.

The American Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) explains how the disease was named: The new name of this disease is coronavirus disease 2019, abbreviated as COVID-19. In COVID-19, 'CO' stands for 'corona,' 'VI' for 'virus,'

and ‘D’ for disease. Formerly, this disease was referred to as “2019 novel coronavirus” or “2019-nCoV.”

A novel coronavirus is a new coronavirus that had not been previously identified or previously seen in humans. This is what makes COVID-19 so dangerous. Because COVID-19 is new to humans we do not have any pre-existing defenses against it.

Information from WHO notes that at this time there are no specific vaccines or treatments for COVID-19, but that many ongoing clinical trials are evaluating potential treatments.

SYMPTOMS

WHO outlines the most common symptoms of COVID-19 as follows:

- Fever
- Tiredness
- Dry cough

As well, some people may experience:

- Aches and pains
- Nasal congestion
- Runny nose
- Sore throat
- Diarrhea

Symptoms are usually mild and begin gradually. Some people may become infected but not experience any symptoms. The CDC says symptoms may appear two to 14 days after exposure.

WHO notes that about 80 per cent of people recover from the disease without any extraordinary treatment, but that one in every six people who develop COVID-19 will become seriously ill and have difficulty breathing. Older people and people with other medical conditions such as high blood pressure, heart problems, or diabetes are more likely to develop serious illness.

Anyone who has fever, a cough, and difficulty breathing should seek medical attention. With many jurisdictions restricting the movement of people to help

combat the disease, this should start with receiving advice via a phone call to a healthcare provider or local health authority.

WHAT IS A PANDEMIC?

WHO defines a pandemic as the worldwide spread of a new disease.

“An influenza pandemic occurs when a new influenza virus emerges and spreads around the world, and most people do not have immunity. Viruses that have caused past pandemics typically originated from animal influenza viruses.”

While the characteristics of influenza pandemics and seasonal influenza can be similar, some aspects differ. “For example, both seasonal and pandemic influenza can cause infections in all age groups, and most cases will result in self-limited illness in which the person recovers fully without treatment. However, typical seasonal influenza causes most of its deaths among the elderly while other severe cases occur most commonly in people with a variety of medical conditions.”

Many people will remember the H1N1 pandemic, which occurred in 2009-2010. This outbreak caused most of its severe or fatal disease in younger people, including those with chronic conditions and healthy individuals. It also caused many more cases of viral pneumonia than is usually seen with seasonal influenza.

The reason for a larger impact on the population during a pandemic is due in part to the higher number of people who do not have pre-existing immunity to the new virus. “When a large portion of the population is infected, even if the proportion of those infected that go on to develop severe disease is small, the total number of severe cases can be quite large.”

HOW COVID-19 SPREADS

WHO explains that people can catch COVID-19 from others who have the virus.

The disease can be transmitted from person to person through small droplets from the nose or mouth that are spread when a person who has COVID-19 coughs, sneezes, or exhales. These droplets land on nearby objects and surfaces, and others can contract the virus if they touch the contaminated objects or surfaces and then touch their eyes, nose, or mouth.

People can also become infected with COVID-19 if they breathe in droplets when droplets are coughed out, sneezed out, or exhaled from a person who has the disease. This occurs when people are in close contact with each other (within two meters or six feet).

Other important information about the spread of COVID-19:

- At this time, WHO does not believe that COVID-19 can be transmitted through the air. The virus that causes the disease is primarily transferred through contact with respiratory droplets.
- The risk of acquiring COVID-19 from someone with no symptoms is very low. However, many individuals experience only mild symptoms, especially at early stages. Therefore, it is possible that the virus could be transmitted from someone who has a slight cough and who does not feel ill.
- WHO advises that the risk is low of contracting COVID-19 from the feces of an infected person. At all times, people should use good hygiene practices, and for a variety of reasons it is prudent to wash hands regularly, especially after using the bathroom and before eating.

As this disease is new, WHO is continuing to evaluate ongoing research about the ways the virus is spread.

SESSION THREE: HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

Now that we have learned what COVID-19 is, its symptoms, what a pandemic is, and how COVID-19 spreads, we will look at ways to safeguard against contracting the virus.

WHO recommends these protective measures:

- Continue to be aware of the latest information about the outbreak from reliable sources, such as WHO, CDC, and the Public Health Agency of Canada.
- Clean your hands regularly with soap and water or an alcohol-based sanitizer (with at least 60 per cent alcohol) to kill viruses that may be on your hands.
- Keep a distance of at least two meters (six feet) between yourself and others (see Social Distancing).
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth so that contamination is not transferred to your face where it can enter your body and make you sick.
- Cover your mouth or nose with a bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze. Immediately dispose of the used tissue.
- On a daily basis, clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces such as tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks.
- If you feel unwell, stay at home. If you have a fever, cough, and difficulty breathing, seek medical attention. Follow the directions of your local health authority. Calling in advance will protect you, help you from spreading viruses and other infections, and ensure that you are directed to the proper health facility.
- Avoid travelling to places where COVID-19 is spreading widely, especially if you are an older person, or you have a health condition such as diabetes, heart or lung disease.

SOCIAL DISTANCING

The Public Health Agency of Canada recommends the practice of social distancing to help reduce the spread of COVID-19. This means making a conscious effort to keep a physical distance between yourself and others.

To minimize close contact with others:

- Avoid crowded places and non-essential gatherings
- Avoid common greetings such as handshakes
- Limit contact with people who are higher risk (such as older adults and people with poor health)
- Keep a distance of approximately two meters or six feet or at least two arms' lengths from others

To practice social distancing:

- Greet people by waving instead of shaking hands, kissing, or hugging
- Stay at home as much as possible
- Shop or use public transportation during off-peak hours
- Conduct virtual meetings
- Host virtual playdates for children
- Keep in touch with family and friends using technology
- Work from home
- Exercise at home or outdoors
- Use food delivery services or shop online

SESSION FOUR: SELF-ISOLATION AND SELF-QUARANTINE

During the COVID-19 pandemic, people may be asked to self-isolate or self-quarantine.

This session explores these terms, along with what is expected from individuals when these measures are implemented. As well, how to deal with self-isolation and self-quarantine if you or a loved one is placed under this condition is examined.

Definitions

Self-Quarantine

- Quarantine separates and restricts the movement of people **who were exposed to a contagious disease to see if they become sick.** (CDC)

Self-Isolation

- Self-isolation **separates sick people with a contagious disease from people who are not sick.** (CDC)

Self-isolation and self-quarantine are among the most proactive and positive acts that can combat the spread of the virus, thereby protecting others.

Who needs to self-isolate/self-quarantine?

Self-isolate:

Persons who are experiencing symptoms of the SARS Cov2 (COVID-19) virus.

Primary symptoms include:

- Coughing
- Fever
- Shortness of breath

- Other signs of respiratory illness

Self-quarantine:

Persons who have travelled to countries that have reported cases of the virus or who have been in close contact with persons confirmed to have the virus.

If you are self-isolated or self-quarantined, what does that mean?

- Stay at home
- Do not go to work, school, or public areas
- Do not use public transportation such as buses or taxis unless you have been told it is safe to do so
- Avoid having visitors in your home
- Ask friends or family members to carry out errands for you, such as getting groceries and medications or doing other shopping

How long is the self-isolation/quarantine period?

- Anyone who is self-isolated must stay in isolation for the duration of any symptoms plus any additional time as directed by healthcare providers.
- Anyone who is self-quarantined must remain quarantined for 14 days from the date of their last potential contact with the virus (date of return from an infected country, date of last potential contact with an infected person).

What to do if you are asked to self-quarantine

- Self-monitor for the onset of symptoms.
- Stay home from school and work.
- Do not take public transportation or visit any public spaces.
- Try not to have any visitors to your house during this time.
- If you have visitors tell them that you are under COVID-19 self-quarantine.
- Keep your distance from others (about six feet or two meters).
- If you experience fever, cough, shortness of breath, or other signs of respiratory illness, seek medical attention (best practice is to call first).

- If you need to seek medical care for other reasons, such as dialysis, call ahead to your doctor and tell them about your recent travel.

How to self-monitor

Complete health checks every morning and every night or any time you feel like you might have a fever.

These checks include:

- Taking your temperature. Wait 30 minutes after eating, drinking, or exercising, and at least six hours after taking medicines that can lower your temperature, such as acetaminophen (also called paracetamol), ibuprofen, or aspirin.
- Watch for any other symptoms of COVID-19, including cough or shortness of breath.
- Record your temperature and any symptoms in a log book.

What to do if you begin experiencing symptoms

- COVID-19 is a respiratory disease. If you experience fever, coughing, and difficulty breathing during your self-quarantine, call an approved hotline or health center to get advice.
- Get advice from medical professionals (approved hotline/health center) before going to a facility for treatment to avoid infecting others.

How to self-isolate/quarantine if you live with other people

- Stay in a separate room with a window that can be opened.
- If possible, use a toilet and bathroom that no one else in the house uses.
- If you must share a bathroom with others, clean it thoroughly after each use.
- When you have used items such as dishes, drinking glasses, eating utensils, towels, bedding, meals etc., do not share them with other people.
- If possible, have someone place your food on a tray at your bedroom door. When you have finished eating, leave everything on the tray at the door. Dishes, drinking glass, and eating utensils should be cleaned in a dishwasher and hands washed properly afterwards.
- If you do not have a dishwasher:
 - o wash dishes, etc. in hot soapy water

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- o wear rubber gloves and wash them while you are still wearing them
 - o remove gloves and wash hands
 - o leave dishes to air dry
- If you must go into the same room with other people while you are self-isolating, wash your hands and wear a face mask if you have one. If you do not have a face mask, stay at least two meters (six feet) away from other people. If possible, anyone in a room with you should also wear a face mask. (See Session Seven for tips on mask use.) When no one else is in the room, you do not need to wear a mask.

How to care for someone else in self-isolation

The CDC recommends:

- Helping them follow the instructions of healthcare providers, and monitor their symptoms.
- Staying separated from them as much as possible (at least two meters) or preferably in another room, and avoid touching them. Use a phone to communicate when possible.
- Forbidding visitors.
- Washing your hands properly every time you have contact with the person.
- If you have face masks, wearing one when you must be in the same room.
- If you must clean phlegm or spit from their face, use a clean tissue, put it into a waste bag and wash your hands.
- Putting them in a well-ventilated room alone.
- Limiting their movement in the house.
- Having them to use a different toilet if possible.
- Limiting the number of caregivers. If possible, only one person should look after the person who is self-isolating. Ideally, this would be someone who is in good health.
- Cleaning all surfaces such as counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables every day.
- Thoroughly washing laundry. Immediately remove soiled bedding and clothing. Wear disposable gloves when handling these items, and wash hands immediately after removing the gloves. Follow laundering directions, using the warmest temperatures recommended.

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- Keeping them away from older people, people with long-term health conditions and pregnant women.

When can self-isolation or self-quarantine end?

Self-quarantine

As long as you did not develop any symptoms during the 14-day period, it is safe to end self-quarantine after the two weeks is over.

Self-isolation

The decision to stop home isolation should be made in consultation with your healthcare provider and local health department.

SESSION FIVE: WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE SICK

Despite following guidelines to protect yourself from getting sick, you may still become infected with COVID-19.

In this session, we will look at what you should do if you become ill.

IF YOU ARE SICK

The CDC advises following these steps if you are sick:

- Seek medical advice if you have a fever, cough, or difficulty breathing and you think you have been exposed to COVID-19. Call in advance before going to a doctor's office, clinic, emergency department, or hospital.
- Stay at home except to receive medical care. Do not visit public areas, and do not use public transportation.
- Separate yourself from others, staying in a separate room and using a separate bathroom.
- Limit contact with pets and animals. If you must care for animals while you are sick, wash your hands before and after interacting with them.
- If possible, wear a facemask when you are near other people.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, and immediately dispose of the used tissue in a lined and covered trash can.
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer with at least 60 per cent alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Wash your hands with soap and water immediately after coughing, sneezing, or blowing your nose.
- Do not share personal household items such as dishes, drinking glasses, eating utensils, towels, and bedding with others. After using these items, make sure they are washed thoroughly.
- Clean and disinfect all "high-touch" surfaces every day. These include phones, remote controls, counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables.

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- Drink plenty of water and take everyday painkillers as needed and as directed by healthcare providers.
- Monitor your symptoms.

SESSION SIX: MENTAL WELLNESS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

During a crisis, it is normal to experience upsetting feelings such as fear and anxiety.

In this session, we will look at how people react psychologically to situations like the COVID-19 pandemic, and how to help yourself and others to cope with any stress caused by the circumstances.

PSYCHOLOGICAL REACTIONS

The Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) says the outbreak of COVID-19 may be stressful for people, causing strong emotions that can be overwhelming. The CPA notes that everyone reacts differently to stressful situations, with reactions depending on a person's background, their differences, and their community.

Sources of Stress

The American Psychological Association (APA) says because people are being asked to stay home either due to illness, or to avoid exposure or active community spread of COVID-19, their regular routines will likely be interrupted for at least two weeks, the estimated incubation period for the virus.

During this time of disruption, the APA says sources of stress can include:

- a decrease in meaningful activities
- an absence of sensory stimuli and social engagement
- financial strain from being unable to work
- a lack of access to typical coping strategies such as going to the gym or attending religious services

What You Might be Feeling

The APA says you may experience feelings of:

Fear and anxiety: You may feel anxious or worried about yourself or your family members contracting COVID-19 or passing it to others. It is also normal to have concerns about obtaining food and personal supplies, taking time off work, or fulfilling family care obligations. Some people may have trouble sleeping or focusing on daily tasks.

Depression and boredom: Being away from work and other meaningful activities interrupts daily routines and may result in feelings of sadness or low mood. Extended periods of time spent at home can also cause feelings of boredom and loneliness.

Anger, frustration or irritability: Losing personal freedom due to isolation and quarantine can often cause frustration. You may also experience anger or resentment toward those who have issued quarantine or isolation orders, or if you feel you were exposed to the virus because of another person's negligence.

Stigmatization: If you are sick or have been exposed to someone who has COVID-19, you may feel stigmatized by others who fear they will contract the illness if they interact with you.

The CPA notes that the situation may also lead to

- Changes in sleep or eating patterns
- Difficulty sleeping or concentrating
- Worsening of chronic health problems
- Increased use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs

As well, the APA notes that vulnerable populations such as older adults, people with pre-existing mental health conditions and health-care workers may have an increased risk of experiencing psychological distress due to social distancing, quarantine or isolation.

“People with disabilities who require specialized diets, medical supplies, assistance from caregivers and other accommodations are also at risk for psychological challenges during a pandemic because of the increased difficulties in receiving the care they require.”

COMBATting STIGMA

This video from the WHO explains how to fight stigma associated with COVID-19:

MANAGING STRESS AND ANXIETY

How to Cope with the Situation

- Talk about your feelings with people you trust.
- Keep in contact with friends and family by email, text, video chat, social media, and phone.
- Sustain a healthy lifestyle. This includes a proper diet, enough sleep, and exercise.
- Do not deal with your emotions through smoking, alcohol, or other drugs.
- Get accurate information and follow the advice of local authorities. Stay informed through reliable sources such as local public health agencies.
- Regulate the amount of time you spend watching or listening to media coverage that you find upsetting.
- Follow a daily routine, which will give purpose and provide a feeling of normalcy despite the unfamiliar feelings experienced due to uncertainty, isolation, and quarantine.
- Stay positive. Take a close and realistic look at your concerns and focus on what you can control. Accept that you cannot change some factors. Keeping a gratitude journal can help with this. Concentrate your attention on unselfish reasons for social distancing, isolation, and quarantine. Your actions are helping to protect people who are the most vulnerable, and helping to decrease the risk of spreading the virus.
- Lead by example. Do not act afraid, which tends to make others feel frightened. Do not participate in panic buying. Keep things in perspective and act sensibly and reasonably.
- Exploit skills that you have used in the past to cope with adversity. Search for resources for coping and resiliency on the internet.
- Keep in mind that life will eventually return to normal.

(Sources: WHO, APA, CPA)

How to Help Children Cope

Children may have difficulty understanding the situation, and may react in different ways. Responses to stress may include acting clingy, anxious, withdrawing, angry or agitated, wetting the bed.

In general, the CPA says children will take cues from parents and caregivers. If the adults in their lives are calm and confident, children are more likely to respond that way.

To support children:

- Talk with your child or teen about the COVID-19 outbreak. Answer questions and provide facts about COVID-19 that your child or teen can understand. Give them clear information about how to reduce their risk of being infected by the disease, using words that they can understand, depending on their age.
- Remember to listen to your children, speak kindly and reassure them that they are safe.
- Respond to your child's reactions in a supportive way, and give them extra love and attention.
- Let them know it is okay to feel upset. Let them learn how to cope from your actions by communicating how you deal with your own stress.
- Be a role model by taking breaks, getting plenty of sleep, exercising, and eating well.
- Limit your family's exposure to news coverage of the event, including social media. Children may misinterpret what they hear and can be frightened about something they do not understand.
- Maintain regular routines. If schools are closed, create a schedule for learning activities and relaxing or fun activities.
- If possible, create opportunities for children to play and relax.

(Sources: WHO, CPA)

Warning Signs

The CPA recommends seeking professional help if you:

- Experience persistent anxiety, worry, insomnia, or irritability.
- Unnecessarily avoid social contacts to the point that you become isolated.

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- Persistently check your body (e.g., taking your temperature many times each day) or continually seek reassurance about your health from doctors, friends, family, or the internet.
- Carry out excessive or unnecessary hygiene precautions, such as wearing a facemask at home or repeatedly washing your hands when it is not necessary.
- Abuse alcohol or drugs, or overeat.
- Receive feedback from friends or family that you seem unusually worried or stressed out.

Ideas for managing stress and anxiety

Eileen Feliciano, a New York psychologist, offers the following tips for taking care of your mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Get showered and dressed every day. Wash your face and brush your teeth.
- Wear comfortable clothes in bright colors, which can lift your mood.
- Fresh air can lift your spirits. If you can, go outside at least once a day for about 30 minutes. To avoid other people, walk on less travelled streets, or go early in the morning or later in the evening. If you are not able to go outside, open a window.
- Keep moving. Exercise indoors, find free classes on the internet, or turn on music and dance.
- Set up virtual playdates for your children using Facetime, Facebook Messenger Kids, or Zoom.
- Cook a new dish or bake something.
- Spend extra time playing with your children, which is cathartic and helpful for them and therapeutic for you.
- If you and the people you live with get frustrated by being cooped up in the house, recognize that this is normal, and that everyone is doing the best they can during this troubling time. There will be times when each person will not be at their best. It is important to be compassionate, and do your best to avoid arguments and disagreements.
- Designate retreat spaces for everyone in your household - their own special place where they can go if they feel stressed.
- Recognize that children will likely have trouble with good behavior during this time, and respond appropriately. Try to be more understanding.

- Lower expectations and practice radical self-acceptance. “We are doing too many things in this moment, under fear and stress. This does not make a formula for excellence. Instead, give yourself what psychologists call ‘radical self acceptance:’ accepting everything about yourself, your current situation, and your life without question, blame, or pushback. You cannot fail at this—there is no roadmap, no precedent for this, and we are all truly doing the best we can in an impossible situation.”
- Focus on good things happening in the world such as people who are being kind and supporting each other.
- Find ways to give back to others, such as supporting local businesses, checking in with neighbors, getting groceries for someone else.
- Identify something you can control, such as organizing a bookshelf or decluttering a closet. This can help with easing feelings of chaos, uncertainty and being overwhelmed by the situation.
- Work on a new project such as learning how to play a musical instrument, put together a jigsaw puzzle, paint a picture, read a new book series, solve puzzles, learn how to crochet.
- Laugh: To counteract any negative emotions being experienced, watch a funny cat video, a comedy show, or a sitcom.

Create a Plan

On a piece of paper, write down things that are causing you worry and stress due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Then, using the information you have learned in this course, reflect on ways you can deal with them. Make your own list of specific things you can do to cope, and write them down.

SESSION SEVEN: HELPFUL TIPS

This session provides more in-depth information about proper handwashing techniques, using hand sanitizer, when and how to use masks, and cleaning and disinfecting, as well as links to trusted sources of information.

PROPER HANDWASHING TECHNIQUES

Do you think you know how to wash your hands properly? Be certain, in order to keep everyone safe.

The CDC advises following these steps **every time** you wash your hands:

- **Wet** your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
- **Lather** your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
- **Scrub** your hands for at least 20 seconds. Humming or singing the “Happy Birthday” song from beginning to end twice will take 20 seconds.
- **Rinse** your hands well under clean, running water.
- **Dry** your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

This video explains how proper handwashing helps kill the COVID-19 virus:

USING HAND SANITIZER

The CDC advises using hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.

- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 per cent alcohol.
- Supervise young children when they use hand sanitizer to ensure they do not swallow it, as this can cause alcohol poisoning.
- Apply enough product on your hands to cover all surfaces.
- Rub your hands together for about 20 seconds, until your hands feel dry.

WHEN AND HOW TO USE MASKS

The WHO provides these guidelines for using masks:

- For healthy people, wear a mask only if you are taking care of a person who is suspected or confirmed to have a COVID-19 infection.
- Before putting on a mask, clean hands with alcohol-based hand sanitizer or soap and water.
- Cover mouth and nose with mask and make sure there are no gaps between your face and the mask.
- Avoid touching the mask while using it; if you do, clean your hands with alcohol-based hand sanitizer or soap and water.
- Replace the mask with a new one as soon as it becomes damp and do not re-use single-use masks.
- To remove the mask: take it off from behind (do not touch the front of mask); discard immediately in a closed trash bin; clean hands with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water.

CLEANING AND DISINFECTING WHEN COVID-19 IS PRESENT OR SUSPECTED

Information from the CDC explains the difference between cleaning and disinfecting:

- Cleaning refers to the removal of germs, dirt, and impurities from surfaces. Cleaning does not kill germs, but by removing them, it lowers their numbers and the risk of spreading infection.
- Disinfecting refers to using chemicals to kill germs on surfaces. This process does not necessarily clean dirty surfaces or remove germs, but by killing germs on a surface after cleaning, it can further lower the risk of spreading infection.

Follow these steps from the CDC for cleaning and disinfecting:

Surfaces

- Wear disposable gloves when cleaning and disinfecting surfaces. Discard gloves after each cleaning. If using reusable gloves, they should be dedicated

for cleaning and disinfection of surfaces for COVID-19 and should not be used for other purposes. Clean hands immediately after removing gloves.

- If surfaces are dirty, they should be cleaned using a detergent or soap and water before disinfecting.
- For disinfection, diluted household bleach solutions, alcohol solutions with at least 70 per cent alcohol, and most common EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective. The list of these products can be found here: <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>
 - If appropriate for the surface, diluted household bleach solutions can be used. Follow manufacturer's instructions for application and proper ventilation. Make sure the product is not past its expiration date. Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser. Unexpired household bleach will be effective against coronaviruses when properly diluted.
 - Prepare a bleach solution by mixing:
 - 5 tablespoons (1/3 cup) bleach per gallon of water or
 - 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water
- Products with EPA-approved emerging viral pathogens claims are expected to be effective against COVID-19 based on data for harder to kill viruses. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time, etc.).
- For soft (porous) surfaces such as carpets, rugs, and drapes, remove visible contamination and clean with appropriate cleaners indicated for use on these surfaces. After cleaning:
 - Launder items following the manufacturer's instructions. If possible, launder items using the warmest appropriate water setting and dry items completely, or
 - Use products with the EPA-approved emerging viral pathogens claims that are suitable for porous surfaces.

Clothing, towels, linens and other laundry items

- Wear disposable gloves when handling dirty laundry from an ill person and then discard after each use. If using reusable gloves, those gloves should be dedicated for cleaning and disinfection of surfaces for COVID-19 and should not be used for other household purposes. Clean hands immediately after removing gloves.
- If gloves are not used when handling dirty laundry, wash hands afterwards.

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- Do not shake dirty laundry as this could disperse the virus through the air.
- Launder items following the manufacturer's instructions. If possible, launder items using the warmest appropriate water setting and dry items completely. Dirty laundry from an ill person can be washed with other people's items.
- Clean and disinfect clothes hampers following surface cleaning guidelines. If possible, consider placing a bag liner that can be thrown away or laundered.

LINKS TO TRUSTED SOURCES OF INFORMATION

If you want to find out more about COVID-19 or want updated information, please visit credible websites such as:

- World Health Organization: <https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus>
- US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/>
- Public Health Agency of Canada: <https://www.canada.ca/en/publichealth/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection.html>

SUMMARY

Congratulations! You have completed the course “Understanding and Coping with the COVID-19 Pandemic.”

In this course, we talked about the COVID-19 pandemic, how to protect yourself and others, and how to deal with it.

First, you learned what COVID-19 is, its symptoms, and how it spreads. You also learned what a pandemic is.

Next, you learned how to protect yourself and others through social distancing and other measures.

Then, you learned the meanings of self-isolation and self-quarantine, and what to do if you must be placed in either of these situations.

Next, you learned what to do if you become ill from COVID-19.

Then, you learned about mental wellness during the pandemic, and strategies for managing stress and anxiety.

Next, you learned proper techniques for washing hands, using hand sanitizer, using masks, and cleaning and disinfecting. As well, you were provided with links to trusted sources of information about the COVID-19 pandemic.

You should now understand more about the pandemic and how to cope with it.

POST-COURSE ASSESSMENT

Post-Course Assessment

1. **Protective measures against COVID-19 include:**
 - a. Keeping a distance of two meters from other people
 - b. Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth
 - c. Washing your hands regularly
 - d. Covering your mouth or nose with a tissue or bent elbow when you cough or sneeze
 - e. All of the above
2. **Primary symptoms of COVID-19 include:**
 - a. Coughing, fever
 - b. Fever, shortness of breath
 - c. Coughing, fever, shortness of breath
 - d. Coughing, fever, shortness of breath, constipation
3. **True or False: COVID-19 originated in animals and was transmitted to humans.**
4. **Social distancing includes:**
 - a. Making a conscious effort to keep a physical distance between yourself and others
 - b. Continuing to go to your place of work
 - c. Greeting people with a handshake
 - d. None of the above
5. **True or False: The first cases of COVID-19 were detected in Wuhan, China.**
6. **Self-isolation means:**
 - a. Separating and restricting the movement of people who were exposed to a contagious disease to see if they become sick

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- b. Separating sick people with a contagious disease from people who are not sick
 - c. All of the above
 - d. None of the above
- 7. Ways to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic include:**
- a. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle
 - b. Limiting the amount of time you spend watching or listening to news about the situation
 - c. Staying in contact with friends and family
 - d. All of the above
- 8. True or False: It is safe to end self-quarantine as long as you did not develop any symptoms during the 14-day period.**
- 9. True or False: Hand sanitizer that contains 30 per cent alcohol is effective against COVID-19.**
- 10. Proper steps for handwashing include:**
- a. Wet, lather, scrub, rinse
 - b. Wet, lather, rinse
 - c. Wet, lather, scrub, rinse, dry
 - d. None of the above

PRE- AND POST-COURSE ASSESSMENT ANSWER KEYS

Pre-Course Assessment

1. **True** or False: COVID-19 is a coronavirus.
2. **True** or False: A pandemic is the worldwide spread of a new disease.
3. True or **False**: The best way to protect yourself from contracting COVID-19 is to listen to advice on social media.
4. **True** or False: It is normal to feel sad, stressed, confused, scared or angry during a crisis.
5. True or **False**: If you become sick, you should go directly to the hospital.
6. True or **False**: Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, tiredness, wet cough.
7. **True** or False: COVID-19 is spread from person to person through small droplets from the nose or mouth.
8. **True** or False: You should wash your hands for 20 seconds to properly wash them.
9. True or **False**: Singing the Happy Birthday song will last approximately 20 seconds.
10. **True** or False: The World Health Organization is a trusted source of information about the COVID-19 pandemic.

Post-Course Assessment

Post-Course Assessment

1. **Protective measures against COVID-19 include:**
 - f. Keeping a distance of two meters from other people
 - g. Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth
 - h. Washing your hands regularly
 - i. Covering your mouth or nose with a tissue or bent elbow when you cough or sneeze
 - j. **All of the above**
2. **Primary symptoms of COVID-19 include:**
 - e. Coughing, fever
 - f. Fever, shortness of breath
 - g. **Coughing, fever, shortness of breath**
 - h. Coughing, fever, shortness of breath, constipation
3. **True** or False: COVID-19 originated in animals and was transmitted to humans.
4. **Social distancing includes:**
 - e. **Making a conscious effort to keep a physical distance between yourself and others**
 - f. Continuing to go to your place of work
 - g. Greeting people with a handshake
 - h. None of the above
5. **True** or False: The first cases of COVID-19 were detected in Wuhan, China.
6. **Self-isolation means:**

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- e. Separating and restricting the movement of people who were exposed to a contagious disease to see if they become sick
 - f. Separating sick people with a contagious disease from people who are not sick
 - g. All of the above
 - h. None of the above
7. Ways to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic include:
- e. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle
 - f. Limiting the amount of time you spend watching or listening to news about the situation
 - g. Staying in contact with friends and family
 - h. All of the above
8. True or False: It is safe to end self-quarantine as long as you did not develop any symptoms during the 14-day period.
9. True or False: Hand sanitizer that contains 30 per cent alcohol is effective against COVID-19.
10. Proper steps for handwashing include:
- e. Wet, lather, scrub, rinse
 - f. Wet, lather, rinse
 - g. Wet, lather, scrub, rinse, dry
 - h. None of the above