

To Your Health

Inspiring Health of Body, Mind, and Spirit

June - September 2020

Abounding with Love!

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Love is Everywhere

We have all had an interesting spring - to say the least. COVID-19 changed the lives of everyone. When “safer at home” began, it was the middle of Lent. Now, it is past Pentecost. Hard to believe. Some days at home seems normal until I listen to the news and then reality sinks in. Like you, I am trying to make the best of a difficult situation. I look for moments to give me a smile or to do something for someone else. You might have completed the long “to do” list or learned a new hobby. I discovered so many things were not banned. Listening to music was not banned, reading a book, playing a game, taking a walk, making cookies, praying-all are still okay to do. I bet you could add a lot more things that interest you and fill your days with cheer.

There are sad times, too. Missing friends and family events, hugs, or spontaneity. Still, the fact so many of us do stay home shows me how much we do care for one another. It is a selfless act to sacrifice something we would like to do in order to keep others safe and healthy. The empty streets were a loud reminder of charity and love. Not just in our city, but all over the world. I find this amazing and awe-filling. If we can do that, what more are we capable of? How can we fill our forthcoming pandemic days with examples of Divine love?

For many years of my nursing career I was a public health nurse. Outbreaks and disease investigation are familiar to me. During this time one experience stands out in my mind. Whilst giving a presentation on the role of a public health nurse to an elementary class, one young lad asked, “What can I do to make your job easier?”. Stunned for a minute at the insightful question, I replied, “wash your hands”. Those words are still true today. Hand washing is “hands down” the best defense against all kinds of communicable diseases. I have thought of that little boy many times in the last weeks. I wonder if he remembers and if he took my

response to heart and if it is saving his life today.

So many things are out of our control right now. But, some things still are. Washing your hands, adhering to social distancing, avoiding crowds, saying home when ill, all are within our control.

We are not out of the woods yet. Now the world is slowly and cautiously reopening. COVID is not gone, and will be with us for a long time. We will have to learn how to live with it. So, I thought it might be appropriate to talk about some of the simple ways we can stay protected. Some of you may know all this information already but it might be important news to some. Or, you are confused with conflicting messages. Or, perhaps you are wary of going out and wondering how you can stay safe.

The information in the newsletter is pulled from research-based and reliable sources. Which is not to say things may change. But this is the latest and best information known to date.

I hope it is helpful. Please stay safe and continue to care for one another. Look for God’s presence everywhere. He is the Great Physician and remains close to us.

Breaking the Chain

I love teaching. I really love teaching nursing students. One topic I enjoy teaching is infection. We call it the chain of infection. It might be helpful to you to understand the things you can do to take care of yourself.

Think of becoming infected as an all or nothing situation. All conditions must be met in order for an infection to occur. At each link of the chain, there are practices and behaviors that can break the chain of infection. I have relied on this information many times in the last weeks, too, to help me put things into perspective. The first link is to have an etiologic agent. Fancy name for an organism that causes the infection. In this case, it is a virus. Corona virus.

Second link in the chain is a reservoir. This is where the organism resides. A human is the reservoir for Corona virus. Next, the infectious agent has to have a portal of exit, or a way out of the reservoir. I imagine you can all pass the corona virus quiz here. If you said nose and mouth you would be correct. Then, once the organism has exited, it has to have a mode of transmission. I tell the students, it might be a car, boat, skateboard or bike. But, the germ has to have a way to get from one place to the next. The mode of transmission for Corona is droplet. Droplet transmission means the organism is not heavy enough to hang out in the air a long time. Typically what happens is the organism travels about 3 feet when someone talks, sings, sneezes or coughs. Then, it drops to whatever surface is below. Maybe it is the ground, or floor, counter top, desk and so forth.

Studies show Corona might survive on those surfaces for up to 72 hours.

So, the organism is out. Now it has to be picked up. Without a way into your body you cannot get sick, So, the organism has to have a portal of entry. A way into the susceptible host. We are all susceptible to Corona because it is a new virus and there is no vaccine available yet. The portals of entrance are eyes, nose and mouth. The membranes of the eyes, nose and mouth allow the virus to enter the bloodstream and multiply and develop disease.

Can you see where we have a chance to break the links? We can't do anything about the etiologic agent. For now, anyway. And, until there is an effective vaccine we are all susceptible. Hand washing, however, will break the link at the portal of entry. Covering your cough and sneeze will lessen the mode of transmission, as will wearing a mask, staying home if you are sick, and social distancing. So, you see, we are not defenseless. We have some artillery in our arsenal. We have power! Let's use what we know to show corona virus who's boss!

“Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of flesh and spirit, making holiness perfect in the fear of God.”

2 Corinthians 7:1

Breathe Easy

Face coverings (AKA face masks) are recommended by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to help

slow the spread of COVID-19. Since there is a portion of the population who are infected but not showing symptoms (asymptomatic), the CDC recommends that everyone wears a face covering when in public at all times. Face coverings and masks are meant to protect people from getting infected while in public. They help prevent droplets containing corona virus from entering the mouth and nose. They are also a reminder not to touch your face. Everyone over the age of two should wear a face covering or mask when they are in public. The CDC says it is especially important to cover your face when you go to the grocery store or to pick up necessities where people generally gather. Anyone who has trouble breathing, is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance may not be a good candidate for wearing a face mask and is best protected by staying home.

The CDC recommends you continue to practice safe social distancing (also known as physical distancing) by keeping at least six feet between yourself and others at all times. Face coverings and face masks should not substitute social distancing. Doing both will reduce your risk.

There are three main types of face coverings: cloth face coverings, surgical face masks, and N95 respirator face masks. Cloth face coverings are the only coverings that should be worn by the general public. Cloth face coverings are face coverings made from household items or made at home from common materials at low cost. A

cloth face covering helps prevent the spread of the virus from the wearer to others. This is especially important given some people are infected but do not show symptoms.

Surgical masks are used in healthcare settings and should not be used by the general public. They fit across the nose and mouth, shielding against large droplets in the air. Surgical masks are too loose to protect against all germs, and they will not block the smallest particles that may carry corona virus.

N95 Respirator Masks (also known as medical respirator masks) are tight-fitting respirator masks that reduce exposure to particles including small particle aerosols and large droplets. N95 masks filter out at least 95% of airborne particles. N95 masks are recommended only for use by healthcare personnel who need protection from both airborne and fluid hazards. These masks are not to be used outside of healthcare settings. The general public should not wear N95 face masks or surgical face masks since the global supply is limited.

Incorrectly wearing your face mask can cause harmful air particles to enter and leave your mouth and nose, increasing your risk of getting or spreading the Corona virus. You lose the effectiveness of the mask if you do not cover both your mouth and nose.

Your face covering should: fit snugly but comfortably against the side of your face, be secured with ties or ear loops, include multiple layers of fabric, allow for breathing without restriction, able to be laundered and machine dried without damaging or changing the shape.

Here is how to correctly put on your face mask:

Step 1 – Wash your hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer so your hands are clean when they come near your face

Step 2 – Inspect your face covering for holes or tears

Step 3 – Place covering over your mouth, like so:

With ear loops: Hold by ear loops and place a loop around each ear

With ties: Bring to your nose, place ties over the crown of your head, and tie

Step 4 – Pull the covering over the bridge of your nose, mouth, and chin

Removing your face covering is just as important as putting it on

Step 1 – Wash your hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer so your hands are clean when they come near your face. Avoid touching the front of the mask.

Step 2 – With ear loops: Gently lift and remove mask holding both ear loops

With ties: Untie the bottom bow, then untie the top bow, and pull mask away

Step 3 – If disposable, throw the mask in the trash. Otherwise, put your reusable cloth mask directly into your laundry hamper or washing machine for cleaning

Wearing a mask adds extra challenges for people with hearing impairments. Not only is it harder for you to understand others who are wearing masks, the ear loops from your own mask may tug on your hearing aids and cause other problems. Because there are so many types of hearing

aids, if you are having problems consider first talking to your audiologist.

Additionally, you can try a few creative options:

Wear a mask with soft fabric ties to relieve the pressure on the ears, instead of elastic.

Use a special mask extender with buttons or other holders to attach the mask loops onto, on the back of the head, instead of the ears.

Using simple tools like plastic s-hooks to loop the mask onto around the back of your head, instead of your ears.

Even if you aren't hearing impaired, wearing a mask can make conversations more difficult. To help the person who is hearing impaired:

Speak slowly, clearly and at a normal volume.

Rephrase remarks when not understood.

Keep background noise to a minimum.

Take turns speaking.

Face each other (at a safe distance).

For those who wear glasses, adding a mask to the mix can be bothersome. When you wear a mask, the warm, moist air that you exhale is typically directed upwards, which can land on your cooler lenses and cause your glasses to fog up. This effect can be even worse in colder temperatures. Try these tips and clear the fog.

First check that the top of your mask is tight and the bottom is looser. This can move your breath away from your eyes and glasses. If your mask has a metal piece in the top, be sure to pinch that piece tight against your nose. If you have a

homemade mask, try to cinch the fabric at the top as tight as you can to your nose and cheeks. Another option is to add a pipe cleaner in the top of the fabric that can then be molded to your face. Athletic or medical tape also can help seal the top of the mask around the bridge of your nose. Additionally, you can put a tissue inside the mask, up on your nose, so that this absorbs some of the moist air. One drawback to this is keeping the tissue in place. If your masks has ties, crisscross the ties so the top ties come below your ears and the bottom ones go above. This will help tighten the mask. However, masks with ear loops should be tightened without causing your ears to be sore. Many ideas exist on how to prevent sore ears from masks, including buttons on headbands, strap extenders and using tie masks. You also may be able to attach the straps to the temples of your glasses, depending on what kind of frame you have. If all else fails, pull the mask up as far as you can, while still being sure it stays under your chin. Let your glasses rest on top of the mask to create a better seal and avoid fogging.

There are a few ways to keep your lenses from fogging up. Try washing your lenses with soap and water and letting them air dry. This may leave a surfactant on the lens and help it from fogging. Commercial anti-fogging sprays and wipes do exist. However, they can be expensive because you will need to use them every three to five days. Some lenses with anti-glare coating can be difficult to stop from fogging, even using these methods.

“Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: See! I will bring

spirit into you, that you may come to life.”

Ezekiel 37:5

Are Gloves Necessary?

Corona virus spreads through droplets in the air. The primary way it enters the respiratory tract is when people inhale droplets that carry the virus. A smaller proportion of cases happen when someone touches a contaminated surface and then touches their face. You can break the chain of infection with the use of gloves. However, handwashing is still the prevention measure of choice.

Gloves provide a physical barrier between your hands and your shopping cart, your car steering wheel, door handles, and other common touch points. But ultimately, gloves don't provide full protection against the virus. If you touch your face with a contaminated gloved hand, it's possible that the virus can enter your respiratory tract. You can also get infected by failing to properly remove your gloves. If germs are stuck to the gloves after you've gone grocery shopping and you transfer germs to your steering wheel or door handle and then your face, you can get infected.

However, gloves do keep your hands clean. For many people, disposable gloves provide a sense of security. If you don't touch your face and you practice proper glove removal, and you discard your gloves in the garbage, then there is no harm in wearing gloves.

Here is a step-by-step guide to properly removing your gloves and discarding them in the garbage.

- ✓ Pull at the outside of one glove by pulling up a section of the glove in the palm of your hand
- ✓ Peel the glove away from your hand, pulling it inside out
- ✓ Hold the glove you just removed in your gloved hand
- ✓ Peel off the second glove by putting your fingers inside the glove at the top of your wrist
- ✓ Turn the second glove inside out; while pulling the glove away from your hand, wrap the first glove inside the second glove
- ✓ The result should be your two gloves wrapped in a ball
- ✓ Dispose of the gloves in the garbage
- ✓ Do not litter
- ✓ Clean your hands immediately after removing the gloves with soap and water or a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol

“ Or let him rely on me for protection, He must make peace with me; peace shall he make with me! ”

Isaiah 27:5

The Clean Club

Components to cleaning hands with waterless hand sanitizers (also known as

handrubs), the proper technique, and how hand sanitizers work. Waterless hand sanitizer provides several advantages over hand washing with soap and water. However, they are not effective if organic matter (dirt, food, or other material) is visible on hands.

Benefits of waterless hand sanitizer:

- require less time than hand washing
- act quickly to kill microorganisms on hands
- are more accessible than sinks
- reduce bacterial counts on hands
- do not promote antimicrobial resistance
- are less irritating to skin than soap and water; some can even improve condition of skin

Waterless hand sanitizers work through the alcohol content of the fluid and friction from rubbing your hands together. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

To get the most benefit from hand sanitizers follow a few simple techniques:

- Make sure all organic matter is removed from hands. All visible organic matter (for example: dirt) must be removed from hands prior to applying waterless hand sanitizer.
- Apply a dime sized amount of waterless hand sanitizer to the palm of one hand or use a waterless hand sanitizer wipe. Make sure you have enough product to cover all of your hand surfaces.

- Rub hands together covering all surfaces of hands and fingers.
- Rub until waterless hand sanitizer is absorbed. Your hands should feel dry. This should take around 20 seconds.

Do not rinse or wipe off the hand sanitizer before it's dry; it may not work as well against germs. Supervise young children when they use hand sanitizer to prevent swallowing alcohol, especially in schools and childcare facilities.

“Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you of two minds.”

James 4:8

Stopping the Spread

Contact tracing is the process of learning everything about where an infected person has been and who they have been in contact with. When a positive case is confirmed, officials perform contact tracing to track down other people who may have come in contact with the patient and advise them to quarantine, self-isolate, or get tested if showing symptoms. This public health practice will help to control community spread of the disease.

If you were to be diagnosed with COVID-19, a representative from the health department would contact you. Along with providing helpful information to you, you will be asked questions about your activities for at least the previous

48 hours. Maybe longer, up to two weeks.

I don't know about you, but I have trouble remembering breakfast some days. My suggestion would be to keep a daily journal. Include in the journal anyone you had contact with outside of the people you live with, the date, time of day and for how long. It would look something like this:

6-8 am - at home

8-9 am - solo walk outside

9-10 am - Mass

12-1 am - grocery shopping

2-3 pm - talked with neighbor outside

This information will gratefully help those on the front line of the pandemic and ultimately the community.

Holy Humor

If we ever were in need of humor it is right now. Try to find something to laugh at every day. Smiling changes our outlook and our body chemistry. It helps us to heal from within.

A pastor liked to lightheartedly quiz young first communicants during their first communion Mass. “What do you have to do to get to heaven?” he asked.

A dozen seven- and eight-year-olds contemplated their shoelaces, but Molly raised her hand confidently. “Die!” she declared.

A young mother was preparing pancakes for her two sons, ages 6 and 4, for breakfast. The boys began arguing over who would get the first pancake.

The mother admonished the boys: "If Jesus were here, He would say, 'Let my brother have the first pancake. I can wait.'"

The older boy turned to his brother and said, "Okay, you be Jesus."

An intoxicated man got on a train and sat down next to a priest. He made himself thoroughly obnoxious, to the priest's disgust.

Finally, he began reading a newspaper. Suddenly he asked the priest. "Father, what causes arthritis?"

"Drunkenness and making a public spectacle of oneself," the priest replied.

"I was just wonderin', Father," the man said. "I was just reading in the

paper here that the Archbishop has it."

During religious education classes, the pastor was explaining that Christians are the "light, salt, and leaven" of the world.

The children understood "light" and "salt," but when the pastor asked them what "leaven" is, they were silent. Finally, young Michelle spoke up: "It's what comes after ten."

"Never let anything so fill you with sorrow as to make you forget for one moment the joy of Christ risen."

-St. Mother Theresa

Psalm 91

Security of the One Who Trusts in the Lord.

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High

Will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.

I will say to the Lord, "My refuge and my fortress,

My God, in whom I trust!"

For it is He who delivers you from the snare of the trapper

And from the deadly pestilence.

He will cover you with His pinions,

And under His wings you may seek refuge;

His faithfulness is a shield and bulwark.

You will not be afraid of the terror by night,

Or of the arrow that flies by day;

Of the pestilence that stalks in darkness,

Or of the destruction that lays waste at noon.

A thousand may fall at your side

And ten thousand at your right hand,

But it shall not approach you.

You will only look on with your eyes

And see the recompense of the wicked.

For you have made the Lord, my refuge,

Even the Most High, your dwelling place.

No evil will befall you,

Nor will any plague come near your tent.

For He will give His angels charge concerning you,

To guard you in all your ways.

They will bear you up in their hands

That you do not strike your foot against a stone.

You will tread upon the lion and cobra,

The young lion and the serpent you will trample down.

Because he has loved Me, therefore I will deliver him

I will set him securely on high, because he has known My name.

He will call upon Me, and I will answer him

I will be with him in trouble;

I will rescue him and honor him.

With a long life I will satisfy him

And let him see My salvation.

Sources in this newsletter:

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To Your Health

A newsletter dedicated to healthy tips to nourish the body, mind and spirit.

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