

“MAKE SURE OF THE MORE IMPORTANT THINGS.”—PHIL. 1:10.



SPIRITUAL ROUTINE: It is vital to maintain a good spiritual routine, including daily Bible reading, heartfelt prayer, preparation and participation in congregation meetings, personal study, family worship, and a meaningful share in the ministry. (Matt. 6:33, 34; Phil. 4:6-8) This routine educates and equips us during these “critical times.” (2 Tim. 3:1-5) It also helps us to trust and rely on current theocratic guidance.—Ps. 86:11; Jas. 3:17.



MAKING DECISIONS: This pandemic has required us to make difficult decisions for our safety and the protection of our health and that of others. Though health decisions, like vaccination, are personal matters, it is wise to be aware of applicable governmental direction and to cooperate with public health officials. (Rom. 13:1-7; Gal. 6:5) We should make it our aim to be guided by Bible principles and updates from the Governing Body.—Ps. 119:105.

For instance, if you are considering vaccination, please review the three factors explained in the [2021 Governing Body Update #6](#). Such loving guidance is most appreciated and reflects the Governing Body’s spirit-directed and Scriptural thinking on the matter. (Heb. 13:17) Allowing the Scriptures to mold your thinking will strengthen your family’s confidence in the decisions you make. *Why not review these factors at a Family Worship session?*



UNDERSTAND YOUR RISK: All persons exposed to COVID-19 are at risk, some more so than others. Consider the following: (A) YOUR VACCINATION STATUS. Those not fully vaccinated have a far greater risk of contracting the disease, suffering its serious effects, and transmitting it to others. (B) YOUR SURROUNDINGS. Remain up-to-date on community factors, such as the general adherence to health and safety regulations, the rate of infection, and the percentage of the population that is fully vaccinated. (C) YOUR CIRCUMSTANCES. Even if you are vaccinated, it is still possible for you to be infected and pass the virus on to others. Understand the danger to those with serious underlying health issues, the unvaccinated, and the elderly. You can find additional information on the [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) website.



MANAGE YOUR RISK: Understanding your risk, as described above, will help you to take appropriate precautions. Carefully plan ahead to manage contact with others not living in your household. For example, those at a higher risk will want to avoid contact with the public while those at a lower risk may have greater flexibility when it comes to association with others, travel, and assembling in groups. Managing your risk also includes the need for you to reduce the threat of infecting others. Be considerate of the unvaccinated, the elderly, and those with serious underlying health issues. The goal should be to minimize the impact of COVID-19 on those who are vulnerable.

ADDITIONAL STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING YOUR RISK:



Face Coverings: Regardless of current local regulations, masks are recommended in indoor public spaces and crowded outdoor settings. Do not touch the front of the face covering or mask during use. Masks should fit well and cover both your nose and mouth. If using a washable face covering, wash and dry it often. When used properly, masks are one of the most protective measures available. The CDC provides additional guidelines in the article [“Your Guide to Masks.”](#) Keep in mind that the use of a face covering is not a substitute for physical distancing.

COVID-19

Helpful Reminders



Physical Distancing: When in public, try to maintain at least six feet of separation between you and those not living in your household. Understand the risks associated with public transportation and crowded stores or restaurants. Potential exposure to the virus increases when indoors.



Cleanliness: Frequently wash your hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds, especially after being in a public place or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. You may use alcohol-based hand sanitizer in addition to hand washing. Frequently clean and disinfect touch surfaces and sanitize packages before bringing them inside the home.



Quarantine and Isolation: If you have had close contact with someone who has COVID-19 or you are displaying symptoms, there are steps you need to take to protect others and yourself. The CDC article "[Quarantine and Isolation](#)" contains specific guidance. If you are having trouble breathing or are displaying any emergency warning signs, you should seek immediate medical attention.

REQUESTING ASSISTANCE – COMMUNICATE WITH THE ELDERS



THE ELDERLY AND PERSONS WITH UNDERLYING MEDICAL CONDITIONS: If you need assistance in obtaining necessary items so that you can stay at home and limit potential exposure, please communicate with the elders. Any who render assistance to such ones should avoid physical contact whenever possible. When physical contact is unavoidable, the visitor should thoroughly wash or sanitize his hands before entering the residence and endeavor to maintain physical distancing. All present should wear face coverings.



NEEDS FOR PRACTICAL ASSISTANCE: If you are having difficulty obtaining food or other basic necessities or applying for financial aid from government or social programs, make it known to the elders.



MEDICAL NEEDS: Each publisher should have a properly completed durable power of attorney (DPA) card and the ability to phone or videoconference their health-care agents, family members, and elders. Along with the executed DPA card, you should have a list of current medications, a written statement of known health issues, and up-to-date contact information for your health-care agents, your emergency contact(s), and the elders in your congregation.

You may find it helpful to review the following references found on [jw.org](#):

- "Disease—How to Reduce the Risk" ([Awake! No. 6 2016](#))
- Virus Outbreaks—What You Can Do ([Whiteboard animation](#))
- "Find Relief From Stress" ([Awake! No. 1 2020](#))
- "Are Jehovah's Witnesses Opposed to Vaccination" ([Web article](#))

When making difficult decisions, consider the following:

- "Make Decisions That Honor God" ([The Watchtower, April 15, 2011](#))
- "Maintain Unity in These Last Days" ([The Watchtower, July 15, 1996](#))
- "Protect Yourself From Misinformation" ([Web article](#))

CLEANING AND DISINFECTING DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

MEANING OF TERMS

- **Cleaning** refers to the removal of germs, dirt, and impurities from surfaces. Although cleaning does not kill germs, removing them does lower their numbers and the risk of spreading infection.
- **Sanitizing** refers to a solution or process that reduces the amount of germs on a surface.
- **Disinfecting** refers to using chemicals to kill all germs on a surface. It does not necessarily clean dirty surfaces or remove germs, but by killing the germs, it lowers the risk of spreading infection.
- Although sanitizing reduces the amount of contamination present on a surface, disinfecting is more effective for killing germs.
- During a biological outbreak it is recommended to **clean** and **disinfect** frequently-touched surfaces on a daily basis, including doorknobs, light switches, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks.—*See g10 June p. 28.*



HOW TO CLEAN

- Clean surfaces using soap and water. Practice routine cleaning of frequently-touched surfaces.
- A microfiber cloth slightly dampened with water is effective in cleaning many surfaces such as glass, counter tops, furniture, doors, etc.

HOW TO DISINFECT

- If the area is visibly dirty, clean it first with soap and water or a detergent.
- Use an [EPA-registered household disinfectant](#).



- Always follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- To be effective, disinfecting solutions often need to remain in contact with the surface for a specified length of time.
- Follow all safety precautions, such as wearing gloves and ensuring good ventilation.
- Other options include a solution of 4 teaspoons of bleach per quart of water or solutions that are at least 70% alcohol.
- Confirm that the bleach is intended for disinfecting and is not past its expiration date.
- Wash your hands immediately after removing gloves.

For additional information see:

- [CDC — Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Home](#)

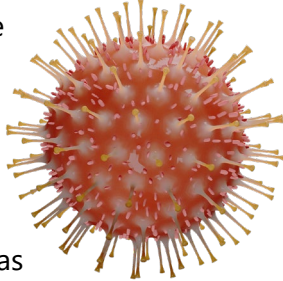


HAND HYGIENE DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Hand hygiene is one of the most effective actions you can take to reduce the spread of pathogens and prevent infections, including the COVID-19 virus. This starts with washing your hands thoroughly with soap and water. These recommendations are based on standards from the Centers for Disease Control and the World Health Organization.

WHY HAND WASHING IS EFFECTIVE

- Under a microscope, coronaviruses appear to be spheres that are covered with spikes, giving them the appearance of having a crown or "corona." Beneath the crown is the outer layer of the virus, which is made up of lipids, otherwise known as fat.
- Since soap dissolves fat, it can disrupt the molecular bonds in the fatty outer membrane of the coronavirus cell.
- Washing your hands properly with soap and water does not just remove the coronavirus; it can actually **destroy** the virus as it is washed away.



WASH YOUR HANDS PROPERLY

- Wash your hands often with soap and water. This is especially important after you have been in a public place or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- **Wet:** Put both your hands under clean, running water.
- **Lather:** Apply a generous amount of soap to the inside and back of your hands as well as your fingertips.
- **Scrub:** Wash for at least **20 seconds**. Rub both hands together and move your fingertips around both hands. Remember to wash under jewelry and fingernails.
 - Time is needed to allow the soap to interact back and forth with the virus particle.
 - In one study, it was noted that the most common shortcoming for most people was the amount of time they spent washing their hands. Only 5% spent more than 15 seconds washing their hands.
- **Rinse:** Use running water to rinse away the soap.
- **Dry:** According to the researchers, it is best to dry hands completely, preferably using disposable paper towels or a clean, unused cloth towel.

SANITIZE YOUR HANDS PROPERLY

- When washing with soap and water is not possible, alcohol-based hand sanitizers can be effective if they are used correctly.
- They must have at least 60% - 70% alcohol.
- To affect the germ membrane, the alcohol must come in direct contact with the virus.
- Placing a small amount of sanitizer in the hand and quickly wiping it away is usually not sufficient.
- Use enough product to cover every part of your hands, including the areas between your fingers and on the back.
- Rub your hands together until they feel dry. This should take around 20 seconds.

For additional information see:

- [Wash and Dry Your Hands! \(g98 11/22 p. 31\)](#)
- [CDC Hand Hygiene Recommendations](#)