

10 Ways to Defend Yourself Against Covid-19 (Coronavirus)

By **Anu Acharya** - March 13, 2020

Amusing as it may sound, the “Covid19” won’t go away by chanting “**Go Corona Go**”. As the WHO has announced it is a pandemic and governments are scrambling to keep their citizens safe, there are many things we can do ourselves. So in the absence of other options, is there something that you as a normal human being can do?

Rome was not built in a day and neither will your immune system be. But Rome did get badly affected by the corona virus lately. The only thing on our minds is how to keep ourselves safe from the Covid19 infection. We find that the highest fatality is amongst:

- Individuals aged 80 years and above,
- With compromised immune systems (due to illness or from being on immune-suppressants), and
- People with pre-existing conditions such as asthma, diabetes and heart disease as they appear to be more vulnerable to falling severely ill from the corona virus.

Having said that, there certainly have been deaths in people in their 30s and younger, but the death-rates for these younger individuals are considered to be lower. So how do we enhance our immune systems – the soldiers of our bodies – to wage a successful war against the very real threat of a lethal virus that has threatened humankind with a pandemic we now know as Covid19?

Read : The science behind Covid for the avid reader

What can you do?

If you are looking for personalized guidance we would be able to do that with our **Genomepatri™** or other **DNA testing services** that include genetic counselling and specific recommendations on lifestyle. But there are some guidelines that you can follow in general.

1. **Don't smoke:** Smoking we know is injurious to health but more so for Covid. The ACE2 receptors are more expressed in smokers, and these are receptors for 2019-nCov, the virus.
2. **Maintain a healthy weight:** Obesity has been linked to several diseases and is a risk factor for many conditions. While one diet doesn't suit all, we all can try to not overeat and exercise. Understanding your genetic makeup may help guide you as well.
3. **Eat a colourful diet:** A colourful diet, no not a rainbow cake but a diet full of vegetables and fruits gives you a lot of natural nutrients that help build your immune system naturally.
4. **Sleep is the best medicine:** Good sleep or rest is essential for building your immune system. A lot of scientific evidence points to how sleep helps in improving your immune response if you do get infected. Sleep is something that you can do in your home, free and every day. Ideally, if you can afford to, 7-9 hours of sleep can equip you with much more immunity than other ways.
5. **Keep calm and carry on:** Stress of any kind is related to a plethora of clinical conditions! Worry is definitely a gift that doesn't appreciate loneliness. It comes free with several disorders and brews the possibility of more in the pipeline. When you stress that much, there is a strong possibility that you would have fawned the virus's appetite to replicate. Remember the song "Don't worry be happy"
6. **Exercise is therapy:** You have already heard this in the past from many health pundits; today may be a good day to start. If heavy aerobic activity is not for you, walking and breathing (Pranayam) can certainly help. Some breathing exercises could be as simple as deep breathing for 3-5 minutes with breathing in through your nose for a count of 5, holding it for a few seconds and breathing out through the mouth at a count of 5.
7. **Maintain Good Hygiene:** If you are in India, you have most certainly heard the audio message by the Ministry of Health about maintaining good hygiene like washing your hands and covering your mouth while sneezing or coughing.
8. **Practice Social distancing:** This may be a good time to finish writing that book or reading those hundreds of books that you bought but never read. Or perhaps go on an overdrive of Netflix. Avoid large gatherings and meetings. Remember sleep is important so make sure you get that while binge-watching. The Indian government has recently placed a lot of travel bans, in any case, making it easier to cancel conferences, meetings and more.
9. **Supplement your diet:** Add Supplements like Zinc, Vitamin C, D and E especially if you have genetic predisposition to have low levels. Avoid overdosing especially with fat-soluble vitamins like A, D and E and K. Consult a medical doctor.
10. **Channelize your inner OCD:** Routinely clean all frequently touched surfaces in the home and workplace such as countertops, sinks, seating, workstations and doorknobs.

Remember, the virus travels without a passport or a visa. It is rather easy to get infected if you get in contact with someone already infected. With testing highly regulated and restricted in most countries, the best way is to not panic, make sure we can build our defense using these simple points and continue to live our lives.

Read: The Pandemic of our times: Conversations about Covid19
