

COVID19: WHAT IS SOCIAL DISTANCING?

Social distancing is a term applied to certain actions that are taken by public health officials to stop or slow down the spread of a highly contagious disease.

The technical definition is: “**Social distancing** means remaining out of crowded settings, avoiding mass gatherings, and maintaining physical distance (approximately 6 feet or 2 meters) from others.”

Social distancing measures are taken to restrict when and where people can gather to stop or slow the spread of infectious diseases.

Social distancing measures include instructing people to avoid being close together, limiting large groups of people coming together, closing buildings and canceling events.

While it may be disappointing that so many schools, businesses, sports events, cruises, festivals and other gatherings are being cancelled, there is a public health reason for these measures. These cancellations help stop or slow down the spread of disease allowing the health care system to more readily care for patients over time.



WHAT CAN YOU ACTUALLY DO THAT WILL HELP?

Even though it may seem simple, practicing good hygiene habits such as washing your hands and covering your cough will really help to stop or slow the spread of many diseases. This list of personal habits includes:

- Don't go to work if you're feeling sick – especially if you have a cough or fever.
- Don't shake hands when greeting others. Social distancing is not being rude or impolite – in fact, getting too close is the “new rude”. Keeping your distance is more important and more respectful.
- Stay at least 6 feet away from everybody on the worksite including during meetings and training sessions. This even includes people that you usually work alongside every day.
- Avoid contact with sick people.
- Wash your hands often for at least 20 seconds. Use soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing, or do so into your elbow.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects.
- Contact a health worker if you have symptoms; fever or a dry cough are most common.
- DON'T touch your face.
- DON'T travel if you have a fever and cough.



Is it a good idea to self-monitor your own condition?

Yes! Self-monitoring means monitoring yourself for fever and remaining alert for cough or difficulty breathing. If you feel feverish or develop measured fever, cough, or difficulty breathing during the self-monitoring period, then you should self-isolate, limit contact with others, and seek advice by telephone from a healthcare provider or their local health department to determine whether medical evaluation is needed.

Symptoms of COVID-19



DOES SOCIAL DISTANCING REALLY WORK?

Fifteen studies have concluded that workplace social distancing was associated with a reduction in influenza-like illnesses (e.g. COVID19).

- Workplace social distancing measures *alone* produced a median reduction of 23% attack rate in the general population. It also delayed and reduced the peak attack rates.
- Effectiveness was declines with delayed triggering of workplace social distancing, and lower compliance.
- Outside of work, mandatory school closures and other social distancing measures were associated with a 29% to 37% reduction in transmission rates.



STAY POSITIVE

Don't let social distancing get you down. Make social distancing a positive by taking time to focus on your personal health, training, diet, physical activity levels and health habits, as well as reassessing your hobbies.

- Don't let anxiety or being at home lead to binge eating or alcohol and drug use. Don't oversleep, but try to sleep at least seven hours a day.
- Know that social distancing can cause anxiety and depression because of disruption to routines, isolation and fear over a pandemic. If you or someone you know is experiencing either, help is available.
- Engage in spring cleaning, clear clutter and donate household items. Home clutter can harbor pollutants, lead to infections and result in unhygienic spaces.
- Social distancing shouldn't translate to an unhealthy life on social media. Much more than one to two times a day to watch, read or listen to national news for general consumption and local news for updates on the spread of COVID19 in your community, means that you're likely overconsuming information and taking away time for yourself and from friends and family, getting angry, and blaming others.
- Reach out to others and offer help. Consider providing for and helping those at risk or marginalized (e.g., the elderly, disabled and homeless; survivors of natural disasters; and people living in shelters).
- Engage in alternative activities to keep your mind and body active. For example, get those outside projects going; listen to a whole bunch of favorite music (and sing along!); get up and go biking, hiking or just walking (keep your distance!); sketch or paint; read - anything; cook; and learn about other new places and people.



Contact HR Director, Kristen Gregory, if you have any concerns on violation of this policy at ext. 209.