

Corona and the community

We are all in the boat together. And now there are waves. The new to us virus abroad in the world is not kind to our kind, and we don't know as much about it as we need to know.

The virus has been named SARS-CoV-19 (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome-Corona Virus- first identified in 2019). The illness has been named COVID-19.

What we do know: the incubation period is 2 to 14 days. The disease is transmitted via respiratory droplets (sneezing, coughing) and contact with contaminated surfaces (door handles, railings, shaking hands with a carrier). We don't know how infectious a person is before they start showing symptoms.

This virus is more infectious than the seasonal flu virus. Each person with the flu infects an average of 1.28 others. Each person with COVID-19 infects 1.4 to 3.8 to 7 others.

Symptoms of COVID-19 are fever and a dry cough. If you have these symptoms stay home. Isolate yourself. Call your doctor to see if you should be tested. Eighty per cent of folks with symptomatic infections start feeling better gradually after five days. However, if you develop shortness of breath or sustained fevers, contact your health care provider. Twenty per cent of symptomatic cases require hospitalization, with 20-32 % of the hospitalized needing intensive care respiratory support. Some, especially children, can be completely asymptomatic yet infectious.

The death rate is 0.1 % for the seasonal flu, 2% for COVID-19 symptomatic infections. But there are three major factors that affect the death rate from COVID-19. One is age. The elderly are more apt to die of this disease.

80 years or > 14.8 %

70-79 years 8.0 %

60-69 years 3.6 %

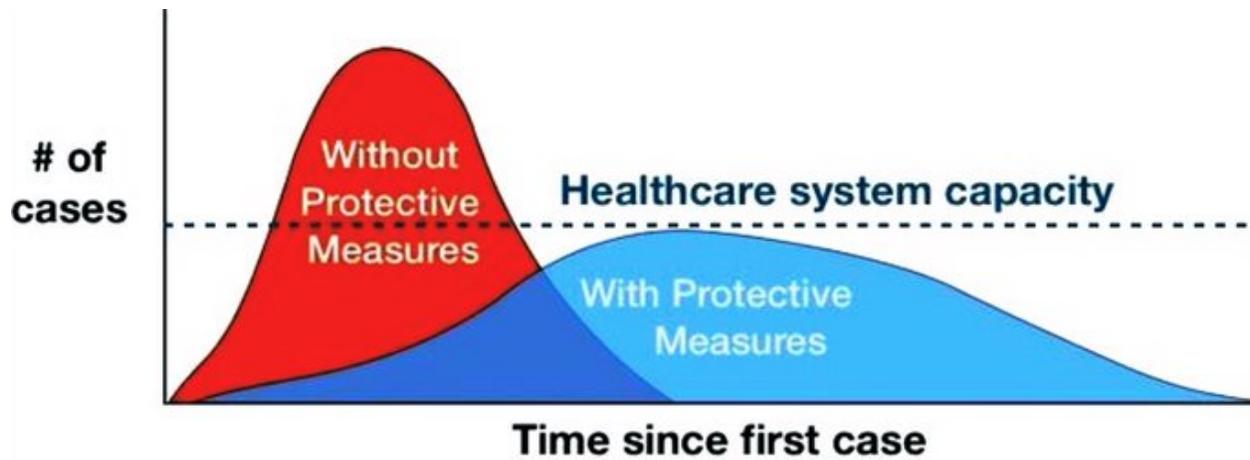
50-59 years 1.3 %

As I think of this community of friends, I murmur a litany for our elders—and I urge them to stay home. Wash your hands. Be a little safer. Do not get on that plane or bus or metro. Stay home! (Do I have to tell Friends to stay off cruise ships?)

Another risk factor for death from COVID-19 is underlying illness—heart disease, chronic lung disease, diabetes, hypertension, etc. Stay home. And yet we are all in the same boat. If you live with an elder or someone for whom this virus would be life-threatening—stay home. Your exposure exposes them.

Epidemiologists believe that within a year 40-70% of the people in the world will be infected. Confirmed cases are doubling every five days. So why don't we all just get it, and get it over with?

Because a third factor in the death rate is the preparedness and capacity to treat the 20% who require hospitalization. And we are not prepared. Hospitals are at capacity already, and we are short of nurses and equipment. Thus, the fewer people who are sick at once, the more will survive the illness.



Adapted from CDC / The Economist

The death rate in Wuhan was 4%. China was more prepared when it spread to other areas, and the death rate fell.

What to do now:

Wash your hand with soap and water (the virus has a fatty membrane which is broken up by soap). Use hand sanitizer if soap and water aren't at hand.

If you (or your pets or neighbors) need prescription drugs, get a three month refill now. Most insurances and pharmacies are not limiting people to a 30 day supply at this time.

Have enough food and other necessities on hand for a few weeks at home. Prepare yourself and others for isolation. We are not as densely populated as China, so gardening and solitary dog walking will be possible.

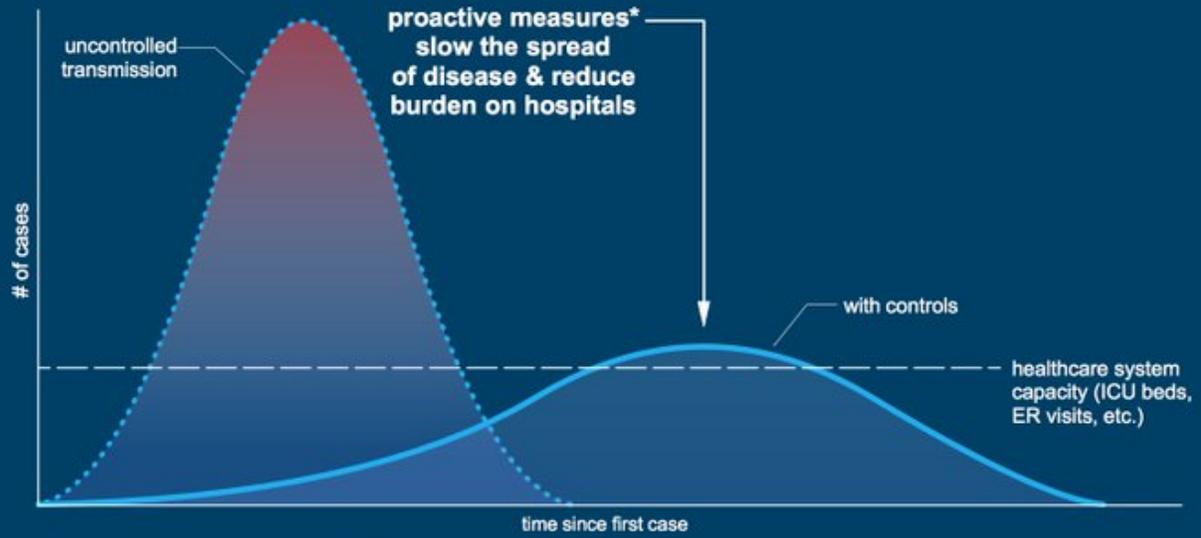
Expect schools and businesses to close and prepare.

We are all in the same boat.

We are a community, and in community, even when we aren't in the same worship space. The work of caring for one another and the world will assume new and unusual forms in the year ahead. May we be open to the guidance of spirit—and the CDC.

We are all in the same boat.

LOWER AND DELAY THE EPIDEMIC PEAK



*social distancing such as teleworking, limiting large gatherings, reducing travel or more assertive approaches.

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