Health&Fitness



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WHAT'S SAFE AND WHAT'S NOT DURING THE PANDEMIC

Doctor answers questions about coronavirus safety

By Jessica Roy and Mark Potts Los Angeles Times

What's safe and what isn't these days?

With coronavirus, it's hard to know. But an expert on viruses has some insights. We posed a selection of burning questions from our readers to Paula Cannon, a professor of molecular microbiology and immunology at the Keck School of Medicine at the University of Southern California.

Is it safe to have my windows open? Is it safe to get takeout or delivery? Do I need to disinfect all my groceries? Is it safe to have sex with my partner or with a person I met on Tinder? Where should I be wearing masks or gloves? Should I be gargling hydrogen peroxide or taking colloidal silver to fight the virus? What kind of face covering is best, and when should I be wearing one?

Some of the answers to your most frequently asked coronavirus questions are below, where they have been lightly edited and condensed for clarity.

• Can you still have sex during this pandemic? Does it help if you don't kiss?

Will having sex with somebody who's infected with coronavirus put you at risk of getting coronavirus? Hell, yes. Whether you kiss or not. Just being up close to somebody else will. So it won't put you at massively more risk than just sharing a bed with them or breathing in the same space or being in the same household. So I guess I don't want to sound like your mother, but it's probably not a good time to be identifying people on an app and having hookups, because even just having dinner with somebody you don't know who's not wearing a mask is putting you at a slight risk. But the extra risk that sex would introduce if you're already sharing a house with somebody, zero. Go for it. I mean literally go for it. • It sounds like it's OK if you're quarantining together, you're not more likely to get sicker from your partner, but it's not a good time to be Tindering. Right. Again, I don't want to sound judgey, but yeah, hold it in, people.



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It's hard to know what's safe and what isn't these days amid the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

or to spread them out over multiple trips?

I would say it depends what type of person you are. Because going out of your house, going into spaces where other people are, the grocery store, the post office, and then coming back home, does require a (decontamination) routine. If you can do the routine well, you have my permission to go to multiple places.

But the way you should be approaching this is, every time you go into a post office or grocery store, you're at small risk (of getting sick), but you're putting other people at risk. When you come out of that space, you need to think about decontaminating yourself before you either get back into your car or go into another place. There's some simple things you can do. For example, if I go to the grocery store, I get back to my car, the first thing I'm doing is I get the Purell on; I'm thinking about how to keep my car safe. So then I can go out and go into another store. If that's challenging for you, if working and behaving in this really weird different way we have to do is stressful and difficult, then I would say just do one trip (at a time). If that's enough for you and your level of anxiety, that's fine as well.

you need to pick your nose, go ahead and do it. Because the only person you're going to be infecting is yourself. Once you're infected, you can't get more infected (from yourself).

What I would tell you not to do is not to be touching your nose, your mouth, everything, and then think of it if you're infected you'll have infected hands, and you have to think about what you're doing with those.

So again, if you're in your own home, not a problem. You're either by yourself or quarantining with people you've agreed to share viruses with. But if you're going out, maybe don't be doing that and then opening a door handle. And this is not just about coronavirus, people. This is how normal people should be behaving anyway. • Can you kill the virus if it's in your throat and you gargle hydrogen peroxide? No. You can't, because the virus isn't just one group of viruses hanging in your throat at any one time and then you can kill them. Viruses, if you're infected, are constantly being produced, constantly shedding; they're in your secretions, they're replicating themselves. They're evil little bastards. Sure, maybe on some small local level you can kill some population of viruses, but they're gonna get replaced instantly. Literally you'd have to be gargling hydrogen peroxide 24 hours a day. • There are a lot of mask patterns out there. Is there one that's the best kind of face covering, or is there one that's so bad that it's worse than not wearing one at all? No. I think there's a lot of

guidance online and people can be creative. I have friends who are fantastic sewers and they're making very complicated designs with multiple pieces that stick out and everything. Honestly, my favorite designs are to take a Tshirt and wrap it around your head a few times and make holes in it that go over your ears and tie it at the back. I think the important

components of an effective face mask are, No. 1, can you breathe? Is it comfortable for you to wear? Because if you can't breathe easily, or it gets wet and it's uncomfortable, you're going to be fiddling with it, and you're going to be doing the very thing we want the mask to stop you from doing, which is touching your face. So have something that's

Should I keep exercising if I don't feel well?

Mayo Clinic News Network

DEAR MAYO CLINIC: Can I continue to exercise even if I don't feel well, or should I hold off until I start to feel better?

ANSWER: The answer to that question depends largely on what's wrong. For example, if you have symptoms of the common cold, it's usually fine to keep exercising. It may even help you feel a little better. If you have a fever or other more severe symptoms, it's best to put your exercise routine on hold until those symptoms go away.

Exercise is important for your body and mind. Regular exercise can help you maintain a healthy weight, keep your blood sugar and blood cholesterol levels in check, increase bone strength and help manage stress, just to name a few benefits.

For healthy adults, the recommendation is 150 minutes of aerobic exercise each week. That includes activities such as running, biking, jogging, swimming, brisk walking and dancing. Many people break up their weekly aerobic activity into 30-minute sessions, five days a week. In addition, your exercise routine should include at least two 20- to 30-minute sessions of strength training a week, which many people have a tendency to forget. Remember, too, that even if you don't get to the recommended level of exercise sometimes, any amount of exercise, even if it's just 10 minutes of walking, has benefits.

When you're not feeling well, it's still fine to exercise in some cases. A good rule of thumb to follow is if you have symptoms above the neck, such as a runny nose, sneezing, nasal congestion or a minor sore throat, you're OK to exercise. In those cases, exercise may even help you feel better by opening up your nasal passages. However, you may want to reduce the intensity and length of your workout, and limit group activities.

Instead of running, for example, go for a walk. If you work out when you're having some symptoms of illness, make sure you stay attuned to your body's need for fluid. Drink to your level of thirst. Be aware that if it's warm outside, you may need to take in more fluid than usual.

If you have symptoms of illness that affect you below the neck, such as chest congestion, a hacking cough, muscle aches, fatigue or an upset stomach, it's best to take a break from exercising for a few days. If you have a fever, you also should give your body some time to rest and recover. A fever is your body's way of telling you to slow down, and it's important to listen to that. As you recover after these kinds of symptoms, go a bit slower and decrease the intensity of your workout when you return to exercising. Due to the current recommendations for social distancing during the COVID-19 outbreak, your fitness center may be closed. Even if it's not, you may want to consider skipping the gym and take your workout outdoors instead, or explore new exercise options that you can do at home. Regardless of where you exercise, don't forget to wipe off equipment, including bikes, weights, benches and yoga mats, after you're done with them. If you exercise when you're not feeling well, and then you experience additional pain or symptoms when you exercise — or if you have other concerns or questions about exercising when you're ill — talk with your health care provider.

• If I have multiple essential trips to make — like going to the grocery store and the post office — is it better to do them all in one trip So you can do either. It really comes down to personality type.

• If I have no symptoms and I'm at home and I've washed my hands, can I pick my nose?

Quite frankly, if you have no symptoms — or even if you do have symptoms — and comfortable.

Secondly, multiple layers are going to help. People take two to three layers, people put linings and things, they've taken things out of vacuum cleaner bags, they've taken some sort of stuffing, anything you know yourself is going to reduce things passing through can help.

You don't want to be wearing something that's like a plague doctor on the front of your face, because that's kind of awkward. But have something that's comfortable, doesn't inhibit you breathing, and stays on. But it can be something as simple as a couple of bandanas wrapped around and tied jauntily at the back. That would actually work very well.

— Dr. Daniel Montero, Orthopedic Surgery, Mayo Clinic, Jacksonville, Florida



Social distancing advice

Mayo Clinic News Network

Countries, states and cities are encouraging people to stay home and practice social distancing by implementing various restrictions to help curb the spread of COVID-19. Some areas have implemented certain restrictions, such as stay-at-home orders. The rules vary in different areas, which is why Dr. Nipunie Rajapakse, an infectious diseases expert, says it's important that people are familiar with what the rules are where they live.

"Some of the general principles are to limit movements outside of your home to only those activities which are completely essential. These are things like seeking medical care, getting groceries that are essential, picking up medications from a pharmacy or reporting to work if you work in one of the essential health care sectors or other in-



dustries," says Dr. Rajapakse.

When going out in public, Rajapakse says it's especially important to practice social distancing, which is keeping a 6-foot radius between you and other people.

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