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10 Things You Don't Know You Should Do to Protect Against COVID-19

As cases of the SARS-CoV-2, or novel coronavirus, soar and our healthcare system prepares to be overwhelmed, Arizonans are rampant with what's called "COVID Fatigue." By now, we all know to wear a mask, wash our hands and maintain a six-foot distance from others. but here are ten additional actions you can take to protect you and your loved ones from the virus, today.

10 Things You Don't know you should be doing to protect yourself against COVID

1. Assume everyone has COVID-19. The best way to approach or be around anyone in a pandemic is to consider that anyone and everyone may transmit the virus. With or without symptoms and regardless of the results of a viral test, every person you come in contact with has the ability to transmit the disease. If we think of that when going in public or inviting people into our homes, we are more likely to take the precautions necessary to avoid infection.
2. Keep your core and no more. Keep your group small. Although you should ideally maintain an inner-circle of in-person contacts to no more than four people, that's not always realistic. You should, however, limit the number of people you allow within your vicinity to the lowest number possible. The fewer people whose air is blown in your direction, the fewer opportunities you have to come in contact with moisture molecules carrying COVID-19. Keep the odds in your favor by keeping your safety zone as small as it can be.
3. Clearly convey your boundaries. It's important to communicate with your core group of people about your desired behaviors. Everyone permitted in your home should be aware of your personal protocols for when to wear a mask and what kind of mask to wear, when and how often you expect hand sanitizer to be used, where you do and don't want them to linger, where they should be seated, how you wish to receive goods from online or bricks-and-mortar stores, where meals should be eaten and other guidelines that make you feel more comfortable. Most people,

especially your loved ones, will understand and accept your rules - especially since they know you are taking everyone's well being into consideration.

4. Become monogamous friends. Unless they're in your immediate family, you don't usually dictate which or how many people others can choose to be around. During this pandemic, however, it's perfectly acceptable - and recommended - to request that your friends limit their number of in-person interactions to your core group. Reciprocally, you should limit yours to the same. Everyone in your core group should be given the opportunity to approve or decline requests to allow additional people into the circle. Don't assume that anyone in your core group will be OK learning that you hosted dinner for a few friends outside the circle or decided to visit the home of someone they don't know. Trust is crucial to every relationship and especially today, when it could affect someone's health and livelihood.
5. Try to stay outside. Outdoor seating isn't just for restaurants. You should make every effort to stay outside, even at your own home or at those of your core group of friends. As with any airborne disease, the more air in which its stimulus has to disperse and become diluted, the less likely it is to infect those in the vicinity. Likewise, when people who are inside your home, other than those who live in it, or when you're inside a home other than your own, everyone should wear a mask.
6. Don't sit face-to-face. The most direct way to transmit or contract coronavirus is to exhale invisible virus-filled moisture droplets or aerosol particles directly in one's face. Whenever seated with others, be sure to sit next to or diagonally from them so that your airflow isn't pointed in their direction and theirs isn't sent directly to your face. Not sitting directly across someone may feel awkward at first, but it will assist with decreasing your viral exposure.
7. Keep it moving. Riding microscopic molecules of moisture, the coronavirus stays aloft in stagnant air for hours. To maintain constant airflow and ventilation, you should keep your windows open as much as possible, keep the fan function of your air conditioner turned on and invest in indoor air purifiers. You should also replace your air filters at least once each month, even if you typically change them quarterly. If someone enters your home with the virus, it will then have a better chance of being blown out and escaping before infecting those you love.
8. Plan to stay warm. Winter makes staying outside more difficult as temperatures begin to fall. Now is the time to invest in a fire pit, outdoor heater or heavy-duty blankets to keep everyone warm. Since it's not currently recommended to gather with others inside, make sure you're prepared to keep everyone comfortable on your patio.
9. Don't let it follow you home. Cleaning and disinfecting before and after people visit your home is something most of us have become accustomed to, but we should also treat ourselves like visitors, once we've been outside our homes. The first thing you should do after venturing out in public or visiting someone else's home is to remove your clothes and shower. It may seem like overkill, but we want to do everything we can to keep ourselves and our families healthy. Also remember that your car is an enclosed space. Don't forget to keep it disinfected as it carries you to and from your place of safety.
10. Increase your distance. The water droplets and aerosols we expel are generated by breathing, talking, coughing and making any kind of noise. Although six feet should be maintained when walking by someone, sitting near them or having a quiet conversation, you should know when that distance should be increased. Respiration is elevated when singing, shouting, laughing, cheering, coughing or sneezing. Those activities increase the quantity and velocity of miniscule droplets and scientific evidence suggests they can be thrust as far as thirty feet. In fact, recent studies show that sneezing releases approximately 40,000 droplets per minute and travel approximately 26 feet, singing produces 3,000 droplets and can travel up to 16 feet and calmly talking results in about 600 droplets reaching six feet. Always consider what is taking place in an environment and create your distance from others accordingly.