



**Corona-Virus**

During times of crisis, including the recent public health concerns about COVID-19 (Coronavirus), it is natural for our anxieties to rise. The onslaught of news, information and misinformation can make us feel unsafe and unsure about how to protect ourselves and our loved ones.

One of the best ways to manage a crisis – and the anxiety that it creates – is to have a plan. Plans provide us structure and help us feel more in control, which serves to reduce our anxieties and fears. The first step is to know the facts.

## What is it?

The Covid-19 virus, more commonly known as Coronavirus, is a respiratory infection. The symptoms of which are similar to other respiratory illnesses, such as the flu or bronchitis, and include: fever, cough and difficulty breathing.

How is it spread?

It is thought that the virus is spread from person to person through respiratory droplets produced through coughs and sneezes. These droplets can directly infect another person. Or, they could land on surfaces and be transmitted by touching the surface and then touching your face (mouth or nose specifically). We encourage you to consider the following tips as you develop a plan:

## Stay informed

- This is a rapidly changing landscape as health officials learn more about the disease and it's spread in the US. Refer to reputable sources for information like the Centers for Disease Control [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) and the World Health Organization. [www.who.int](http://www.who.int).
- You can also access up-to-date information by logging into your PersonalAdvantage account [here](#). Look for the news alert banner on the top of the page for resources including more tips and news sources with live updates.

## Practice good hygiene

- Health experts agree that the best way to reduce the spread of illness is to wash your hands regularly for at least 20 seconds at a time. Alternatively, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- They also recommend not touching your eyes, mouth, and nose with your bare hands. This can take some conscious practice for those of us with a habit of putting our hands to our faces.
- Cover your mouth & nose with a tissue when you cough and sneeze. Then throw the tissue in the trash. If a tissue is not available cough or sneeze into your bent elbow.
- Keep a distance from others to prevent the spread of the virus. Avoid contact with vulnerable populations, such as the elderly or those with pre-existing medical conditions.
- The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends keeping 1 meter (3 feet) from someone who may be sick.

## Prepare to work from home

- The best way to manage a contagious illness is to reduce exposure to others. If you are sick, stay home to avoid infecting others.
- Ask your employer if remote work is possible for your job. If so, equip yourself with the necessary tools to perform your duties from home. For example, bring home your laptop nightly and be sure to have a compatible power cord.

## Practice self-care

- Stress and lack of sleep can make us more vulnerable to viruses such as the flu and COVID-19. Healthy eating, staying well hydrated, exercise and regular sleep can build emotional and physical resilience.
- It is also important to stay strong mentally to reduce the anxiety that can occur. This could include engaging in self-care rituals like meditation, mindfulness, journaling, practicing gratitude, breathing exercises, and staying engaged in hobbies.

## Prepare your home

- Consider adding extra food on your shelves and medicine in your cabinet should you get sick. While there is no need to stockpile, a few extra cans of soup and a bottle of fever-reducer such as ibuprofen or acetaminophen. Think about other items, such as diapers, you might require should you need to stay at home for a couple of weeks.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects in your home and office.

## Consider back-up care

- If you have children or older adult loved ones who need caregiving, contemplate who could care for them if their usual caregiver becomes ill. Find out if your employer has a backup care program and if so, enroll before you need it. Alternatively, contact your Employee Assistance Program to discuss possible care options.

Your Employee Assistance Program is here to help you and your family members manage the anxiety from health concerns such as the Coronavirus. **If you need additional information, please call MINES and Associates at 1-800-873-7138.**