HOW TO AVOID INFECTION

How long does the virus last in the air?
The virus gets into the air through breathing and sneezing, and the droplets of moisture released in the air can contain the virus. There is evidence that it can linger in the air for a few hours. It is critical to stay out of public spaces as much as possible, and to stay a minimum of 6 feet away from people if you do have to go out.

Is there a way to destroy the virus in the air?
There are no proven ways to disinfect the air or to remove droplets from the air. The best precaution is to use physical distance – stay at least 6 feet away from other people.

Is the virus more likely to stay in the air indoors or outdoors?
There is little information on this, however it is most likely to remain in the air longer indoors, because there is no wind, rain, or other forces to remove it.

Do masks help protect me if I must go out?
The scientific evidence that masks will protect you from getting the virus is evolving. Currently, maintaining physical distance is most effective. If you choose to wear a mask, make sure that you are still following recommended guidelines – maintaining physical distance, regular hand washing, and not touching your face. The N95 rated masks should be reserved for high-risk exposure situations. A regular surgical mask should suffice in all other situations.

How long should one self-quarantine after incidental exposure, upon returning home after going out (to work, grocery store, etc.)?
There is no recommendation to self-quarantine for incidental public exposure, unless the person is sick, or you were within 6 feet of a person for more than fifteen (15) minutes and you are concerned that person may be infected. We do not want people to socially isolate themselves from people in their own home. Also, aside from healthcare professionals there is no recommendation to leave your clothes and shoes outside. We want you to do the right things when you are in public and remain connected to family and loved ones in your own home.
WHEN WILL THE VIRUS STOP SPREADING?

When is the virus expected to peak in our area?
Based off current data, we are predicting a peak in infections between the second week in April and second week in May. We do not know if infection rates will reduce at that point. The only example of the virus peaking and then having some resolution is in China, and we’re not sure if that is accurate data.

Do hospitals have capacity for the patients projected during the peak?
If the rate of infection continues as it has, Wisconsin hospitals will not have capacity to care for all sick patients.

Where will patients go if the hospitals are full?
There are several area colleges with empty dorms that have offered access for patients. There are also empty hotels and other gathering spaces that could be used.

If you or someone you live with are sick, how do you avoid spreading within your household?
You must use extreme physical distancing in your home to avoid spreading the infection. Use separate or disposable dishes, don’t share clothes, blankets, beds, disinfect rooms after use, and always stay at least 6 feet apart.

Is there a vaccine or treatment?
At this point, no. There are no confirmed treatments or vaccines available for coronavirus. There are many people working on experimental treatment options and the data is very limited. We don’t expect there to be a vaccine available for 12-18 months.

Given how contagious it is, will coronavirus ever stop spreading?
The current practice of physical distancing is intended to slow the spread to give time to develop a vaccine, and to prevent the hospital systems from being overwhelmed. Strict isolation and physical distancing are the best chance at containing the virus to prevent spread. It is likely that it will be rolling, with multiple peaks over the next 18 months, before a vaccine can be found.

Once you recover from the virus are you immune?
We don’t know. There are reports of people that were sick, got better and became sick again. We don’t know if they had recovered, and became sick again, or if they hadn’t fully recovered. Technically, this virus doesn’t mutate quickly, so we are hopeful people who recover will have an immunity that will last at least through this year.

When can we get back to work?
If we find an easy way to do testing, and strict physical distancing is practiced, we may be able to get back to work within a month or two. Without that, it could be multiple months before things return to normal.

How can we help our community?
Share this information to help stop the spread. Be kind, compassionate and understanding that we all are coping with this disruption and we are in this together.

FAQs will be updated regularly as information on COVID-19 is rapidly changing.