

Discover Newsletter
for colleagues in Africa
April 2020



Surviving the Coronavirus

Dear Friends,

Since my last newsletter, a corona virus has spread all over the world, many people are ill with the disease COVID-19 which it causes, some have died and no matter in what country we live, our way of life is now affected drastically.

Please:

- 1) Learn how the virus is spread.
- 2) Learn what are the symptoms of the disease it causes.
- 3) Don't panic – we can protect ourselves.
- 4) Do what you can to support your family and others in the community.

1. How the virus spreads.

The virus spreads in two main ways, via hands and droplets from our nose or mouth:

A) **Via hands.** The virus survives for some hours on metal surfaces (including shop counters), clothes, plastic, paper (including money). If you get the virus on your hands, and then touch your face (which most of us do quite often without realising), then the virus infects us quickly through our eyes, nose or mouth.

Therefore:

- a) Wash your hands several times a day with soap, especially every time you arrive home, as well as after using the toilet and before preparing food. The best advice is to wash the hands for 20 seconds - maybe sing the song "happy birthday" twice. There are six actions, wash the palms, wash the backs of the hands, wash between the fingers, wash the backs of the fingers, wash the thumbs and wash the finger ends. (see pictures: <https://tinyurl.com/uzrjdel>)
 - b) If you have no running water in the house, ensure you have a good tippy-tap so that you can wash your hands with soap under running water. (More info: <https://tinyurl.com/ycrce4zo> and here a short video from the Fweny Network in Kenya: <https://tinyurl.com/vpgcwaw>)
 - c) Keep your toilet very clean.
 - d) Avoid touching the face.
 - e) Avoid physical contact with others, wave, smile and talk, but do not shake hands, hug or kiss.
- B) **Via droplets** produced when a person coughs or sneezes, or through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose. We are seldom aware of this, but whenever we speak, we spray tiny droplets out of our mouths. These droplets can reach up to 2 metres.

Therefore,

- a) When you meet other people, especially when you are near shop assistants and other customers, keep 2 metres (6 feet) away from them.
- b) When you cough or sneeze, always do so completely into your elbow.
- c) Stay at home except for essential tasks and exercise.

If you wear a mask, this protects others from your droplets, but does not protect you from those of other people. It is a matter of respect for others, therefore, to wear a mask. One can make one's own face mask quite easily, see for example <https://tinyurl.com/uvmhew>
The virus is not spread by contact with domestic animals. It spreads from person to person. Try to avoid needing to visit the hospital, where there are always many people.

2. The symptoms of the disease vary between different people. Some people have no symptoms at all. The common symptoms of the disease are fever, tiredness and a dry cough. A runny nose is not a common symptom of this disease, it is usually a sign of a common cold.

Therefore,

- a) If you have a sore throat, gargle with warm salt-water, or take garlic oil or garlic honey.
- b) Continue to be very careful even if you have no symptoms – it takes several days for symptoms to appear after being infected. To protect your family, act as though you really do have the virus; wash your hands regularly with soap, do not touch anyone and take great care.

The people most at risk are those with a weak immune system, those who already suffer long-term health problems including heart and respiratory problems and diabetes, and people over 70 years old.

There are reports that holding your breath for 10 seconds is a sign that you are well. This is NOT accurate. Please do not let anyone tell you that this is true.

3. Protect yourselves. In addition to observing good hygiene, do everything possible to keep your immune system strong:
 - Exercise. Walk, run or cycle, but where there are few people. Enjoy nature, go to the forest or another area of natural beauty. This also helps to relieve stress. In such circumstances are now, when we are anxious about how we to feed ourselves, or anxious about our health, it is important to relieve stress as much as possible.
 - Eat many different fruits and vegetables in order to take in vitamins and minerals. If you have not already done so, now is the time to include moringa and grain amaranth in your diet.
 - Drink a variety of herbal teas, for example lemon grass, artemisia, ginger and lemon. Add honey if possible. It has been claimed that by frequently taking warm drinks the virus is flushed from the throat to the stomach where it is harmless, but this idea is unproven. Many herbs do have anti-microbial effects and drinking them may help. Drinking a lot keeps the body hydrated and a variety of herbs has beneficial medicinal effects.

- Use all the herbs you know and have available that strengthen the immune system, there are so many, some of which are also anti-viral. I mention just a few: artemisia, moringa, neem, garlic, aloe, rosemary, grain amaranth, ginger, lemon, onion.
- Use a minimum of sugar – if possible, none! Sugar weakens the immune system.
- Keep active. Work in the garden. Sing your favourite songs. Play musical instruments.
- Sleep long and well. Tea from groundnut leaves (infusion) or passion fruit leaves (decoction) helps one to relax and sleep.

Those who have attended a Discover (or anamed) seminar should be well-placed to survive this crisis, with a garden of fruit, vegetables and medicinal plants, all organically grown.

4. Help your family and community

- Teach all the contents of this newsletter.
- Help your neighbours to make and use tippy-taps.
- Teach all children proper hand washing. Count 1 2 3 4 5 6 as you perform the various actions in this link (already mentioned above) : <https://tinyurl.com/uzrjdel>
- Teach your neighbours how to make soap. Soap is very important because it destroys the membrane of the virus and kills it.

As a result of the lockdown, some good things are happening. Less traffic means fewer people are injured or killed in road accidents. Families are spending much more time together and parents are spending more time with each other and with their children. In some communities, neighbours are helping each other. Where relationships are not so good, however, this can be a very stressful time, especially where any sort of abuse is taking place. Some people suffer major health problems for which they now getting no treatment. Your neighbours may need your help – but remember to keep your distance.

Some of these things are already happening. Two small examples. Eric Kihuluka in Kaliro, Uganda, just before the lockdown installed a hand-washing point for all the people who arrived in Kaliro town. Christopher Nyakuni in Arua, also Uganda, has distributed grain amaranth seeds to many of his neighbours.

5. Finally, what can we do to help to prevent such deadly diseases from occurring in the future?

The latest scientific research suggests that when wild animals are put into cages, or hunted and eaten, there is a danger of disease passing from animals to people. Where ecosystems are destroyed those animals that remain are those most likely to carry transferable diseases.

Therefore, we must protect wildlife and biodiversity. We must ensure that there are large areas in our countries that are devoted to wildlife that are not subject to mining, logging, road building or human development. National Parks are very important and must be protected!

For more information on this theme, see for example: <https://tinyurl.com/u9suffv>.

Best wishes – and stay healthy!

Keith