The Coronavirus
Questions and Answers

Umur Amma Department, Disaster Preparedness
United States of America

Should I be wearing a mask?

The Centers For Disease Control (CDC) does not recommend masks for the public. Masks are rather thin, don’t fit tightly, and are not suited to prevent viruses from being inhaled. Doctors treating coronavirus use specialized masks called N95 respirators. Those are tailor fit, usually require a training class, and are not intended for lay use. Take care to cover your mouth when you sneeze and cough.

Why is hand washing important?

Coronavirus is a respiratory infection. Particles of the virus are breathed out and can settle on surfaces which are touched. While your skin is a good barrier, thin mucus membranes like the eyes, mouth, and nose are not and they can absorb viruses easily. If you need to touch your eyes, nose, or mouth, thoroughly wash your hands first. Water and soup are good. Hand hygiene products such as alcohol gels and wipes are also preventative.

What are the symptoms?

It’s really similar to a flu. You might have a sore throat, fever, chills, body aches, sweats, and chest inflammation giving you a cough and making it uneasy to breath.

What do I do if I have the symptoms?
Take precautions from spreading your illness to others. Call your doctors office and see if you can make an appointment, or if they’d like for you to come into their waiting room. If you are concerned and would like to speak to an Ahmadi doctor, your local Secretary Umur Amma can help locate a doctor to speak with.

**Are some more at risk than others?**

Yes. The elderly, frail, and chronically ill are more vulnerable to coronavirus than the rest of the population. If you are taking care of parents or loved ones who are immunocompromised, have pre-existing lung diseases, or are chronically unwell, ensure they take the recommended precautions.

**Is this a deadly disease?**

Coronavirus may not be as deadly as some think. The estimated mortality rates vary, but more reputable sources cite 2%. This is more than the traditional flu. The vast majority of those who contract the disease do recover from coronavirus, and recover completely. The conventional flu is also deadly, claiming millions of lives every year, mostly the elderly and chronically ill.

**What exactly is Coronavirus?**

Coronaviruses are a family of viruses, and when they affect humans they usually give us colds. Sometimes viruses can develop or mutate new strains or jump specials and infect humans which can have affects that are not yet known. You may have heard of MERS and SARS, these were also coronaviruses believed to have done that.

**Is there a vaccine?**

There is not a vaccine for this virus. Vaccines require time to prepare, sometimes more than a year. Vaccines do not guarantee you protection against viruses.

**Are we overreacting?**
The response is an active matter which is sometimes difficult to judge in the moment. It is better to prepare well but then pray sincerely and rest assured that whatever is God’s ultimate plan is best. Even if COVID-19 turns out not to be a big deal, the next one may be and your response now will help you prepare for a future response, just like a fire drill.

**Should we cancel local events?**

Tarbiyyat Department has fresh guidance from US markuz that programs are not to be cancelled at this time, and that you should comply with the local standards announced by the authorities in your area. In the vast majority of places work and school have not been closed at the writing of this message, although matters can change at any time and the extent of caution varies city to city. Huzoor cautioned against large gatherings if you can avoid them in his March 6, 2020 Friday Sermon but he also said that attending the mosque should continue unless of course someone develops symptoms.

**Any specific instructions at the mosque?**

Avoid the mosque if you’re feeling ill. For events like Juma, you can use a hand sanitizer station for use upon entrance and exit. Respect your peers by taking personal responsibility if you sneeze by covering your mouth. Some people are more averse to personal contact given their reasons so don’t take it personally.

**Should I avoid shaking hands?**

Huzoor said generally these days it better to avoid it and also added that in Islam the practice of wudhu (ablution) done at the mosque is a natural decontaminant. You can also use hand sanitizer. Those who are healthy and enter the mosque using these practices have cleansed themselves and certainly those who are ill should keep away.

**Can I fly outside of America?**
The latest government travel advisory in regards to coronavirus as of March 7, 2020, subject to change:
“Do not travel”: China & Iran.
“Reconsider travel”: South Korea.
“Exercise caution”: Japan, Italy and Mongolia.

Generally, if its not essential air travel then avoid it. [www.Travel.State.gov](http://www.Travel.State.gov) issues travel advisories and can be referenced for guidance if you have international travel plans. If your travel concerns are limited to coronavirus be advised to specify that in your search because some advisories are general and relate to political or social unrest. Also be advised that advisories evolve and could change while you are in another country.

**Should I stock up on food and resources?**

Stocks of certain resources are diminishing on the shelves of stores including sanitizers, water, toiletries, and food, in case an quarantine goes into effect. You should use the Umur Amma disaster preparedness checklist, and recall that Huzoor Aqdas (aba) in the past has said we should have food and water stocked for 6 months in the case of a nuclear disaster. Please contact your local secretary Umur Amma for the checklist if you do not have it.

**Do I need homeopathic medicines?**

There are medicines for prevention and treatment which are tailored for viruses similar to COVID-19, and that is the best homeopathic medicine we have right now. After consultation with doctors Huzoor has recommended a prescription which he said we should take. Ask your local secretary Umur Amma to obtain the medicines, and he can contact our homeopathy division if he needs help ([homeopathy@ahmediyya.us](mailto:homeopathy@ahmediyya.us)).

**I’m prepared, how can I help?**

Have a team ready to assist the elderly, physically weak, and sick members so they do not have to leave their homes if things get worse. Reassure your families and members that Allah has a plan for mankind, so after doing our
part we should be prepared to help others in need. Sometimes we don’t know all the answers right away, but above all keep faith in Allah and don’t despair, especially as heads of the household and office holders in Jamaat.

These are recommendations as of March 8, 2020 and subject to change if given new guidance or circumstances.

For more resources, please contact your local Secretary Umur Amma who has been given a few handouts from various sources.

Some relevant national department contacts:

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