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CONSCIOUS ACTIONS TO KEEP HEALTHY

By Catherine Yong

We live in complicated times.

You may have learnt from the news and friends and family, about a virus outbreak that the World Health Organization (WHO) is trying to contain.

At time of writing, there are over 1000 casualties, and many more reported as sick with the COVID-19 disease. On the plus side, we are also hearing news of infected patients recovering.

What's scary however, is how quickly the virus is spreading.

China's Hubei province, is suspected to be the source of the novel coronavirus, and the disease is reported to have spread to about two dozen countries.

This is despite the Chinese government working around-the-clock to close transportation, schools and markets.

In the middle of January, healthcare workers who are tirelessly working to treat these sick patients, have been diagnosed with having the COVID-19 disease.

Closer to home, our neighbours down south, Singapore, has raised the orange alert.

This means the disease outbreak is deemed to have moderate to high public health impact, and the government would be taking further measures to minimise the risk of the coronavirus transmission.

What makes this COVID-19 disease tricky, is that symptoms do not show up till about ten days later.

In any case, here is a checklist of things we can do to reduce the risk of us and loved ones, contracting the virus.

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First things first

First of all, do not panic. That is the worst thing we could do to ourselves right now.

Also, we need clear and calm heads to continue to reduce risks of infection and keep ourselves and our family members safe.

Here's what we know so far:

1. Viruses, including the spike-covered novel coronavirus, thrive in damp environments.
2. The virus known as nCoV-19, can spread through droplets such as from the mucus or saliva of an infected person. This way of disease spread is called droplets transmission.
3. A single sneeze or cough can create over 100,000 droplets. These unseen droplets can travel as far as 6 feet away from its source, and the virus in these droplets can last to up to 45 minutes.
Read about it here: <https://www.nature.com/news/the-snot-spattered-experiments-that-show-how-far-sneezes-really-spread-1.19996>

Now that we know these important basics, here is what we can do:

1. We already know how droplets transmission works and how far droplets can go.

But, we never know what the surfaces we come into contact with, have been through.

Remote controls, light switches, taps, door knobs are examples of surfaces which are cleaned the least often, but which we come into contact with the most. Also, what about the outside of a used mask?

So, avoid touching your face as much as you can.

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2. Sanitise your hands often. Be aware that you sanitise your hands at crucial moments like after using the restroom, or before eating and drinking.

But, besides these, when else are good times to sanitise your hands?

3. Keep your hands dry. Keep your mask, if you are wearing one, dry.

Dispose of the mask safely, at the end of the day. Do not reuse it.

4. If you feel the urge to sneeze or cough, do so into the crook of your elbow. Using a tissue to cover your nose and mouth is ideal. Dispose of tissue immediately after.

Being aware of these simple steps and being conscious of actions we usually take for granted, can go a long way in reducing risk of transmitting not just the coronavirus, but other bacteria and germs.

HH SwamiGuru has always talked about the importance of being aware of our environment; we need to know who are around us, what is happening around us, and how to manage ourselves in these surroundings.

This can be especially useful for us to reduce health risks to ourselves and our loved ones.

Catherine Yong believes utterly in the power of regular meditation to focus the mind and increase our consciousness of our actions. She currently meditates every day, for at least 15 minutes.
