

Keeping Safe During COVID-19

With the nation caught in the midst of a global pandemic, here are a few simple strategies from [the American Consumer Institute](#) to help keep you and your family safe.

Outside the Home

Avoid unnecessary trips outside the home. In public areas, the CDC recommends [6ft of social distancing](#). For reference, that is equivalent to twice the length of an average grocery store shopping cart.

Avoid unnecessary visits to elderly or immunocompromised friends and family. It can take [up to 2 weeks for symptoms to appear](#), and so visiting vulnerable people risks spreading the virus without you knowing.

Offer to pick up groceries or medication for people at risk. Limiting their exposure to public areas limits their risk of infection.

The CDC recommends that if you have returned from travelling to an affected country or a cruise, isolate yourself [for 14 days](#).

At Home

Wash your hands regularly with soap for at least 20 seconds, especially after returning home from public places. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers are also effective.

For at-risk people, consider diligently cleaning hard surfaces and items that may have come into contact with asymptomatic people. [Recent research](#) suggests that the virus can live on plastic and stainless steel for 72 hours, and on cardboard for 24 hours. [Diluted rubbing alcohol](#), for example, can be used.

Rinse vegetables and fresh fruit under running cold water. Despite popular claims otherwise, the FDA [does not recommend](#) using soaps to clean produce. Similarly, researchers at the University of Maine have found [commercial vegetable washes](#) sold in supermarkets to be no more effective than water.

Know the symptoms: fever, fatigue, coughing, and difficulty to breathe.

Before leaving the house to seek medical care, the World Health Organization recommends [calling your healthcare provider](#). They can direct you to the correct facility to treat the virus.

Above all, don't panic. According to the World Health Organization, 80% of people who contract the virus will recover [without any special treatment](#).

The American Consumer Institute is a nonprofit educational and research organization. For more information about the Institute, visit www.TheAmericanConsumer.Org or follow us on Twitter @ConsumerPal.