

## SOME COVID-19 SOCIAL DISTANCING FUNDAMENTALS - March 22, 2020

Let's start with a sound generalization from a local physician to a BHV member: "The whole idea is to keep out of situations where you might meet up with the virus. So anything out of your control (e.g., not your own home, car, etc.) puts you at risk." BHV offers below some fundamentals based on reliable sources.

### 1. Everywhere

- Cover coughs and sneezes. (COVID-19 is especially transmitted by droplets from sneezing.)
- Handwash frequently – 20 seconds with hot soapy water.
- Don't touch your face with unwashed hands.
- Use wipes when available to clean your hands and surfaces others may have touched – handrails, grocery carts, elevator buttons, doorknobs, etc.
- Keep a 6' diameter around you except with intimates you know have not been exposed to COVID-19 and, realistically, who knows?

### 2. At home

- Stay at home as much as possible. That is the current CDC guidance for all Massachusetts residents 65 and over, and those of any age with complicating health conditions.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces often
- Physical intimacy is OK with your regular partner so long as you are both sure about COVID-19 exposure. A new partner may not be a good idea right now.<sup>i</sup>
- Be sure visitors or delivery people have followed precautions to avoid exposure or, for deliveries, have them ring the bell and leave it at the door.
- Limit groups to 10. But the 6' diameter guidance still applies. (Most downtown Boston residents do not have nearly this much space!)
- Have a "household plan of action" as recommended by CDC for elderly and at-risk Massachusetts residents," viz.
  - Have at least a 2-week supply of usual prescription and over-the-counter medications, food and other essentials. BHV continues its shopping services and we will be shortly supplying information about additional ways of getting groceries and prepared food delivered.
  - Keep a current list of important phone and e-mail contacts, including BHV (617-723-9713 and info@bhvillage.org), your doctor, your pharmacist, family and friends.
  - Keep up with important developments via trustworthy sites.

### 3. Away from home

- Observe the 6' rule wherever you are.
  - You can walk, bike, etc., freely outdoors. Join others in small groups.
  - You can shop for groceries and go to the drug store but avoid crowds.
  - You can pick up takeout orders as long as restaurants are open for business. It is a way we can support our local businesses.
- Ensure that any premises you visit have clear and clearly observed additional cleaning routines, offer hand sanitizers, etc. If they don't or you can't confirm, think twice.

#### 4. What you can't do

- Sit down in a restaurant or bar. All restaurants and bars are closed to on-premises services until at least April 6. Many remain open for takeout and delivery.
- Visit most hospitals, nursing homes, rest homes or assisted living facilities. Check with any particular facility before trying to visit.
- Go to any gathering of more than 25 in confined indoor or outdoor spaces through April 5. This includes gyms and health clubs, religious services and in Boston, all BPL locations.
- Go to the mall. Most mall owners have closed their locations.
- Most schools, colleges and many facilities like libraries and museums are closed. Some offer online services or virtual tours.

#### 5. What you should think at least twice about.

- Discretionary travel foreign or domestic by whatever means.
- Public transportation including cabs, Uber and Lyft. Bring your wipes and keep the 6' rule.
- Basically, leaving home if you are over 65 or otherwise at risk.

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<sup>i</sup> See <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/mar/18/can-i-have-sex-a-guide-to-intimacy-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak>.

*Barbara and Steve Roop wrote this piece and are responsible for any errors that have crept in. They appreciate comments on drafts from other members of BHV's COVID-19 Response Team.*