

What is Social Distancing and Why do I have to care?

Social Distancing – means that you must remain at least 2 metres (6 feet) away from anybody that you don't presently live with. It means that you should limit your time outside or at the grocery store. As much as possible you should remain in your house.

If you have a private back porch – you and the people you live with – can sit on the porch. But if you share an entranceway with your neighbours – you shouldn't gather on the front porch. You also shouldn't leave your door open.

Will it be over soon?

No. It could go on for 3 months or more. And everyday - the government is putting stricter measures in place to ensure that people are obeying the rules. If people keep ignoring the rules – major fines will be in place and people may be arrested.

What stores and services are open?

There was a list of what the government terms “essential services” that are allowed to remain open. This is apparently going to be adjusted week by week. This means that places like clothing stores – hair dressers and such are closed. Dentists are open – but only for life threatening emergencies. Doctor's offices are open – but many appointments are being handled by phone appointments. Landscapers - are allowed to deal with things like dangerous trees – but not regular groundwork. Mechanics are presently allowed to be open – but that could change.

When I pass people on the street – or my neighbour goes by me – they jump away. What is wrong with them?

The virus is so severe and so contagious – that you could catch it from droplets from a cough. People are being extra cautious to avoid catching it or passing it.

This is why you can't sit on your front steps – and chat. Whether you live upstairs or downstairs – if you are on the steps – and you don't get up and move when your neighbours come home – you are at risk to yourself and others. The Government is presently asking us to live by certain rules – but if worse comes to worst – they will impose large fines on individuals.

I think that the City regulations are silly and are too extreme.

Aside from the fact that people are getting sick and dying by the thousands in the United States and in the rest of the world – the Government has the right to impose far stricter regulations.

The City closed the parks – and people started taking down the caution tape and using the playground equipment anyway. The City is now considering serious fines if it is discovered that people are doing this – and anyone caught may be fined thousands of dollars. The same goes for people who are not keeping apart from their neighbours.

I don't care if I get the virus – I am young or healthy and will probably not get too sick

You may think this way – but consider that if you get sick – so may everyone you live with. So best case is that you will all be contained to your house for at least 14 days – or possibly longer. No leaving the house – no shopping for groceries – just you and your family – alone – in your apartment. We all love our families – but can you imagine – no time alone for weeks?

And the virus is much more severe for older people. If you live with an older person – you are a constant threat to their health – if you don't abide by the rules. If you invite a friend over – they also pose a threat to your older relatives.

Can I have my regular friends or family over to visit? They live very close by and I see them all the time.

NO.

Why Not?

The more people you visit with or are in close contact with – the more likely it is that you will get sick. Many people are leaving the house – at least once a week – or more often – if they are in a job that is considered an essential service. If you yourself are careful – and keep distant except from your own family members – you are still exposed to many people who could be potentially sick. And the more people you visit with outside the people you live with - - the more people you are actually exposed to. If you interact with 10 people over the course of a week – and they interact with 10 people – well – the number of people you have actually ended up interacting with – is huge! The problem is that many people don't know they have the virus until they start showing symptoms. If you have visited with them – prior to them having symptoms – then – you and your family could get sick - and if you have elderly people – or people in your household who have other illnesses they could end up in the Intensive Care Unit and die.

Many people in the world have.

Why?

COVID 19 – the virus that is currently the cause of the worldwide Pandemic spreads from person to person very easily. If someone has sneezed – or coughed and has the virus – it remains on surfaces for a long time – and you could easily get it.

What happens if I get it?

In some cases – the virus causes people to become very sick – but with care – they can get better and recover. You may have seen that Sophie Gregoire Trudeau was diagnosed with COVID – and she has now recovered.

But in many other cases – people (particularly people who have other medical problems) or older people can catch the virus – become very ill and die. Many people have died.

Many People Die from the Flu each year – why is this different?

Although it was initially thought that this virus was no different than the flu. But for two reasons it is different. 1. It is highly contagious. Although we have a flu season every year – an unprecedented number of people are catching COVID – to the extent that entire countries have been put in lockdown – people only allowed out for brief times and people who are in violation of the restrictions – are given heavy fines.

2. There is a flu vaccine that in most years – protects people from catching the latest strain of the flu – and because so many people have been vaccinated -the people who couldn't be vaccinated – are also protected.

What is the 14 day Quarantine and If I have stayed home for 14 days am I safe?

If you have been away on a trip or you have been exposed to someone who is sick – you may be told that you have to quarantine yourself for 14 days. This means stay home – don't go out for groceries – don't leave the house at all. You will have to have things delivered to you and the person delivering – can't go in your apartment. It takes up to fourteen days for the symptoms to appear. If you are healthy at the end of 14 days – you may go out. But this doesn't mean that you won't catch it *after* the 14 days. You still have to follow social distancing – you still have to limit your contact to your family or people you live with. You could be fine and healthy at the end of 14 days – and then you could catch it the very day you go out.

Can I sit in my courtyard – or on my front steps – can I go for a walk?

Yes and no.

If you are under quarantine for the virus – or you have been told to stay home for 14 days because you have been exposed then – NO. You simply can't leave your house – and you can't interact with other people. If you live with other people – you and your family will all be under quarantine. None of you will be allowed to leave the house.

If you are NOT under quarantine – then – you can (so far - it may change) go for a walk – but keep your distance from other people when you pass them.

If you sit in the courtyard - by yourself or with only a few other people – and make sure that you are keeping your distance – no sitting together on a bench - unless you are sitting with one person that you presently live with.

If you sit on your front steps – make sure - that you get up and move – if your upstairs or downstairs neighbour wants to pass. That is your responsibility.

