

*During a public health emergency, staying informed is more important than ever. Below are some articles on COVID-19 to help you understand it better.*

*This packet should take you around 2 1/2 hours to complete. Do not do it in one stretch because there is a lot of information contained in it.*

*Suggested break up:*

*Section 1, 2 and 3: Day 1 (75 min)*

*Section 4, 5 and 6: Day 2 (75 min)*

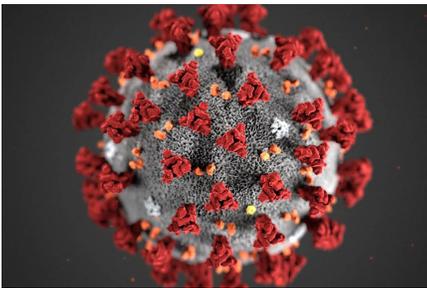
1. Before reading the articles create a KWL chart on a sheet of paper. (What do you know, or think you know, about this virus and its impact? What else do you want to know? )
2. Read the article given below, then answer the following questions.

## The Coronavirus: What Scientists Have Learned So Far

A respiratory virus that originated in China has infected more than 100,000 people and has begun to spread to other countries.

A new respiratory **virus** that originated in Wuhan, China, has spread to over 100 countries in Asia, Europe, North America and the Middle East. More than 100,000 have been infected.

So far, most of those infected with the virus have been in China, and most of the deaths have occurred there, as well. But now South Korea, Iran and Italy are coping with significant **outbreaks**. Italy has imposed restrictions throughout the country.



The Union Health Ministry in India has said that a total of 81 persons are now infected by the new virus, 1 is dead and three persons have been cured and discharged from hospitals as of 13 March, 2020.

### **What is COVID-19?**

A coronavirus is a type of virus that usually causes colds. There are many different types of coronaviruses. Some coronaviruses lead to severe outbreaks. Coronaviruses get their names because they look like crowns

under the microscope.

### **Where did the virus come from?**

It is thought that the new coronavirus outbreak started in a market in Wuhan, which sold meat and live animals. Scientists say that the virus is not closely related to any human virus currently known.

### **How does it spread?**

The new virus spreads from person to person. Drops from an infected person's cough or sneeze carry the virus to someone new.

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Some coronaviruses can cause the common cold. Severe coronaviruses infect deeper parts of the respiratory system. Infected people are not usually **contagious** until they start to show symptoms. But people might be infected and not show obvious symptoms.

### What symptoms should I look out for?

The COVID-19 symptoms can range from very mild to severe. People sickened by the new virus may develop a fever and cough. They could have difficulty breathing. Some people might experience mild symptoms. People who are older or have existing medical conditions may be at higher risk of serious illness.

The symptoms of 2019-nCoV may appear from two to 14 days after the person is exposed to the virus. It may take a person five days to become visibly sick.

### Is there a test for the virus? What is the treatment?

There is a **diagnostic** test that can determine if you are infected.

Once a coronavirus infection is confirmed, the treatment is mainly supportive, making sure the patient is getting enough oxygen and managing his or her fever.

Patients with mild cases are told to rest and drink plenty of fluids while the **immune system** does its job and heals itself. Most people with mild infections recover in about two weeks. More than half of those who have been infected globally have already recovered.

### How long will it take to develop a vaccine?

A coronavirus vaccine is still months away — and perhaps years. While new technology and improved global coordination have allowed researchers to act quickly, vaccine development remains an expensive and risky process. Researchers would still need to conduct extensive testing to prove a vaccine was safe and effective.

### How can I protect myself?

The best thing you can do to avoid getting infected is to follow the same general guidelines that experts recommend during when one has a cough and cold, because the coronavirus spreads in much the same way as a common cold or cough does. Wash your hands frequently throughout the day. Avoid touching your face, and maintain a distance — at least three feet — from anyone who is coughing or sneezing.

#### Vocabulary

- **Virus:** a very small living thing that causes infectious illnesses.
- **Outbreaks:** A time when something suddenly begins, especially a disease or something else dangerous.
- **Contagious:** a disease that is contagious can be passed from person to person.
- **Diagnostic:** Identifying a particular illness using a combination of signs and symptoms.
- **Immune system:** The immune system is the body's defense against infections. The immune system attacks germs and helps keep us healthy.
- **Vaccine:** Vaccines are substances that prevent the spread of disease.

After reading the article then answer the following questions:

- In your own words, why has there been panic in response to the coronavirus?
- How and where did the outbreak initially happen, and why has it been so difficult to contain?
- What can people do to protect themselves?

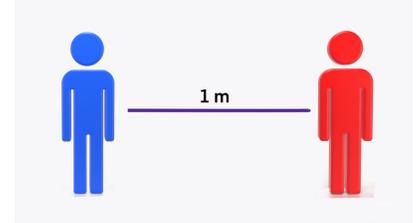
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- Going back to your KWL chart did some of your questions get answered? Were there some mis-understandings that got addressed?

3. Read the article given below on social distancing, then answer the following questions.

## Social distancing.

With the World Health Organisation declaring COVID-19 a global **pandemic**, the need for social distancing to prevent the spread of the infection is being emphasised. Social distancing is the practice of reducing close contact between people to slow the spread of infectious diseases. Social distancing measures include limiting large groups coming together, closing buildings and cancelling events.



It is also important to follow normal Indian etiquette - the namaste- to greet others instead of handshakes.

**Decontamination** of surfaces frequently and maintaining hand hygiene are other measures people must keep up with.

Research has shown that in urban areas and regions where a disease is spreading, taking measures like working from home, shutting down schools, and canceling large events can reduce the rate of new infections.

### Vocabulary:

**Pandemic:** a worldwide spread of a new disease.

**Decontamination:** is the process of cleansing an object or substance to remove contaminants

After reading the article then answer the following questions:

- Explain social distancing in your own words.
- After reading both the articles why do you think many countries are taking measures to implement social distancing?
- A lot of people explain the value of social distancing using this image. What connections can you make between the two?



- Going back to your KWL chart did some of your questions get answered? Were there some mis-understandings that got addressed? Do you have some unanswered questions? If you do please email/call/message Ms. Tushanka and she can try and help you find the resources to answer your question.

#### 4. Facts About Boosting Your Immune System

It's crucial to stay healthy as the threat of coronavirus spreads. Here are the best strategies.

- Exercise: Try and get 30 to 60 minutes of mild exercise in a day.
- Get adequate sleep: 7-8 hours of sleep.
- Watch your diet. Stick to a healthy, balanced diet filled with lots of colorful fruits and vegetables. In addition, drink lots of water. Avoid/Reduce the consumption of junk food. For example: Fried food like chips and food with high sugar content like chocolates and sweets.

5. These are some statements you may hear about the Covid-19. Read the statement and think about how you would respond to it. Note down your responses. *(After you have completed this, check the responses on the last page.)*

- 'Why are people overreacting.. This is just a normal flu.'
- 'We must regularly and thoroughly clean our hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or wash them with soap and water.'
- 'As Indian's our bodies have the toughest immune<sup>1</sup> system. We have grown up surrounded by so much dirt and pollution that our natural resilience<sup>2</sup> is much stronger than people in other parts of the world.'
- 'I am young. Even if I get it I will be able to recover from it. I don't need to take all these precautions.'
- 'Please cover your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze. Then dispose of the used tissue immediately.'
- 'It is best to avoid pets and animals to prevent exposure to Covid-19.'
- 'Eating garlic will prevent the virus.'
- 'Someone refuses to shake your hands and greets you with a namaste.'
- 'The virus will not be transmitted in hot and humid climates like India. We don't need to worry'
- 'Eating non-veg can cause coronavirus.'
- 'Everyone should wear a mask.'

6. In school just before break your teachers shared some basic protective measures we can all take against the new coronavirus. Take some time to read through this and share it with your family members at home.

#### Wash your hands frequently

Regularly and thoroughly clean your hands with soap and water or a sanitizer.

Why? Washing your hands with soap and water or using alcohol-based hand rub kills viruses that may be on your hands.

#### Maintain social distancing

Maintain at least 1 metre (3 feet) distance between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing.



<sup>1</sup> protected from a disease or the like

<sup>2</sup> the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties.

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Why? When someone coughs or sneezes they spray small liquid droplets from their nose or mouth which may contain virus. If you are too close, you can breathe in the droplets, including the COVID-19 virus if the person coughing has the disease.

### **Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth**

Why? Hands touch many surfaces and can pick up viruses. Once contaminated, hands can transfer the virus to your eyes, nose or mouth. From there, the virus can enter your body and can make you sick.



### **Practice respiratory hygiene**

Make sure you, and the people around you, follow good respiratory hygiene.

This means covering your mouth and

nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze. Then dispose of the used tissue immediately.



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### **If you have fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical care early.**

Stay home if you feel unwell. If you have a fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical attention and call in advance.

Self-isolate, this means avoid situations where you could infect other people. This can help prevent the spread of infections. DO NOT attend activities or gatherings where you may come in close contact with other people. This includes work, school, public transport, grocery stores or restaurants, malls, sporting events, weddings and birthday parties. If you are in a home, minimize close contact with the other members of your household by avoiding situations where you may have close contact.

The central helpline number for COVID-19 queries in India is +91-11-23978046. Anyone can dial the helpline number for queries and clarifications regarding the coronavirus pandemic.

The helpline for Maharashtra is 020-26127394.

### **Stay informed** on the latest developments about COVID-19.

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5. These are some statements you may hear about the virus. Read the statement and think about how you would respond to it. These are some ways that you could respond to the statements.

#### **a. 'Why are people overreacting.. This is just a normal flu.'**

*There are similarities and differences between Covid-19 and the flu, but we know much less about the novel coronavirus. Some differences that have been observed are:*

*We know that Covid-19 is more infectious than flu. It has been noticed that a person who is infected with Covid-19 spreads it to more people than the flu, so it may spread farther and faster than flu.*

*People who are older or have existing medical conditions may be at higher risk of serious illness due to Covid-19.*

*Unlike the flu, there is no vaccine for Covid-19 and we are unlikely to have one for at least a year, if ever. There are not yet any medications that can be used to treat Covid-19.*

*One bit of good news is that, unlike with the flu, children up to at least age 18 appear to not become very ill with Covid-19.*

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b. **‘We must regularly and thoroughly clean our hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or wash them with soap and water.’**

*I agree. Washing your hands with soap and water or using alcohol-based hand rub kills viruses that may be on your hands.*

(Source: WHO)

c. **‘As Indian’s our bodies have the toughest immune<sup>3</sup> system. We have grown up surrounded by so much dirt and pollution that our natural resilience<sup>4</sup> is much stronger than people in other parts of the world.’**

*Actually, there is no scientific evidence to support this statement that Indians are more immune than people from other countries.*

d. **‘I am young. Even if I get it I will be able to recover from it. I don’t need to take all these precautions.’**

*It is true that if you are under the age of 18 and don’t have any other underlying health conditions you may not become very ill. However, everyone must take precautions because you may recover quickly but could end up passing on the virus to others who may then be affected severely by it.*

e. **‘Please cover your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze. Then dispose of the used tissue immediately.’**

*‘This is a good practice. Droplets spread the virus. By following good respiratory hygiene you protect the people around you from viruses such as cold, flu and COVID-19.’*

(Source: WHO)

f. **‘It is best to avoid pets and animals to prevent exposure to Covid-19.’**

Actually there is no evidence to support this claim. The WHO (World Health Organisation) has stated this on their website: “While there has been one instance of a dog being infected in Hong Kong, to date, there is no evidence that a dog, cat or any pet can transmit COVID-19. It is mainly spread through droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or speaks. To protect yourself, clean your hands frequently and thoroughly.” Let us not panic and spread mis-information that could possibly lead to animal cruelty.

(Source: WHO)

g. **‘Eating garlic will prevent the virus.’**

*Garlic is a healthy food that may have some antimicrobial properties. However, there is no evidence from the current outbreak that eating garlic has protected people from the new coronavirus.*

(Source: WHO)

h. **‘Someone refuses to shake your hands and greets you with a namaste.’**

*It is actually best to avoid shaking hands because respiratory viruses can be passed by shaking hands and then touching your nose, eyes or mouth.*

(Source: WHO)

i. **‘The virus will not be transmitted in hot and humid climates like India. We don’t need to worry.’**

*From the evidence so far, the COVID-19 virus can be transmitted in ALL AREAS, including areas with hot and humid weather. Regardless of climate, adopt protective measures if you live in, or travel to an area reporting COVID-19. The best way to protect yourself against COVID-19 is by frequently cleaning your hands. By doing this you eliminate viruses that may be on your hands and avoid infection that could occur by then touching your eyes, mouth, and nose.*

(Source: WHO)

j. **‘Eating non-veg can cause coronavirus.’**

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<sup>3</sup> protected from a disease or the like

<sup>4</sup> the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties.

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*Nothing has been established so far and it is completely safe to eat non-vegetarian food in India. The only thing that you need to take care of is that the meat has been hygienically cooked and should not be raw, which is the best way to prevent any disease transmitted through animal meat.*

**k. 'Everyone should wear a mask.'**

*Wear a mask only if you are coughing or sneezing. Masks help only when used in combination with frequent hand-cleaning with soap and water or sanitizer. If you wear a mask, then you must know how to use it and dispose of it properly.*

*How to dispose of a single use mask: Remove it from behind. (Don't touch the front of the mask). Discard immediately in a closed bin. Clean hands with soap and water or sanitizer.*

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I hope this information will help you and others around you. Viruses are contagious but so is panic, fear, kindness, calm and joy. :)

Hope you get time to rest, do little things that you like, take care and spend time with your family!