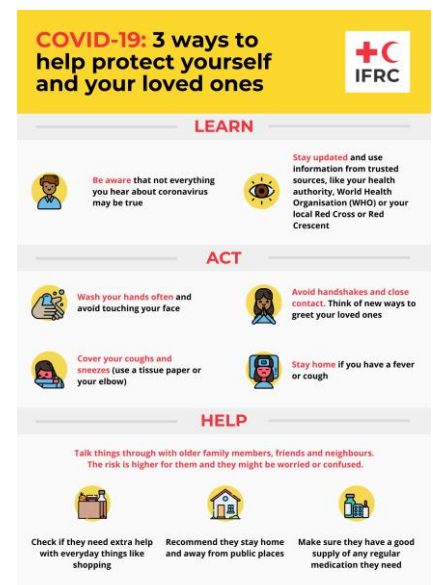




Dr Ben is Head of Health and Care with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). With this weekly fact sheet he will address some of the most common questions and rumours being asked by communities across Africa about the coronavirus, known as COVID-19. These questions and rumours are collected from communities by Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies working across Africa. This fact sheet aims to help National Societies respond to common questions and provide the facts behind the rumours and misinformation about the coronavirus.

## 1. What can we all do to fight this disease?

- The best way to protect ourselves and others from COVID-19 is by following these 5 rules:
  - Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly
  - Don't touch your eyes, nose, and mouth
  - Maintain a safe physical distance from others and avoid crowded places
  - Cover your mouth and nose with when sneezing or coughing
  - Stay at home if you feel unwell and don't have contact with other people but call your local health services if you have difficulty breathing or a high fever.
- COVID-19 spreads from person to person so following the guidelines above is crucial in stopping the spread of the virus. We must work together to help end this outbreak, or the virus will continue to spread, and more people will become infected. When people stop passing the infection on to each other – that's when this outbreak will end.
- As we fight against this pandemic, it is also important that we take the time to look out for each other. Offer support and solidarity by talking to your friends, family and neighbours. Fact-check the information that we are receiving to prevent misinformation and remember to share information on the disease with others.



**COVID-19: 3 ways to help protect yourself and your loved ones** IFRC

**LEARN**

- Be aware that not everything you hear about coronavirus may be true
- Stay updated and use information from trusted sources, like your health authority, World Health Organisation (WHO) or your local Red Cross or Red Crescent

**ACT**

- Wash your hands often and avoid touching your face
- Avoid handshakes and close contact. Think of new ways to greet your loved ones
- Cover your coughs and sneezes (use a tissue paper or your elbow)
- Stay home if you have a fever or cough

**HELP**

Talk things through with older family members, friends and neighbours. The risk is higher for them and they might be worried or confused.

- Check if they need extra help with everyday things like shopping
- Recommend they stay home and away from public places
- Make sure they have a good supply of any regular medication they need

## 2. Can people be cared for at home?

- Yes, if you have mild symptoms such as cough, headache or low fever, there is no need to go to a hospital. Stay at home and don't have contact with other people until you recover.
- Separate yourself from the rest of your household and keep a distance of at least 2 meters. You and the person looking after you should wear a mask when you are near each other. This is important to keep your family members safe.
- Don't share plates, cutlery, glasses, bottles or towels with other people to avoid passing the infection. Make sure what you do use is thoroughly cleaned with soap and water after you use it.
- Do not leave your home unless it is to seek medical care. Ask someone to bring you food and supplies. If you do need to go outside, wear a mask to avoid infecting others.
- If you have pain in your chest, difficulty breathing, or a high fever call your Ministry of Health hotline so they can tell you where to go for help. It's important you phone first so you limit your time outside and risk of passing the virus on to others.

## 3. What is a Thermoflash? How does it work and is it a test?

- Thermoflash or thermal imaging camera are thermometers that are used to measure the temperature of a person without using physical contact.
- To take the temperature, the thermoflash should be pointed to the upper part of the face and kept 5cm away from the person. After a few seconds you should be able to read the temperature.
- This tool is being used as a temperature screening to help identify people with possible symptoms of COVID-19. This is done to prevent infections and control the spread of the disease.
- If someone screens positive for symptoms they should be directed to where they can go to seek help or advice.



## 4. Is the disease spreading faster during the rainy season?

- There is no evidence to suggest that the speed of infection is connected with the seasons of the year. You can catch COVID-19 during any season whether rainy, sunny, hot or humid.
- In fact, countries with hot weather have also reported cases of COVID-19. Therefore, exposing yourself to the sun or to temperatures higher than 25C degrees DOES NOT prevent or cure COVID-19.
- What can happen during the rainy season, is an increase in floods. Heavy floods can damage people's homes and health facilities meaning they may have to live in over-crowded shelters, with limited handwashing and sanitation facilities, and have less access to healthcare. With these conditions, the spread of COVID-19 is a serious risk as people may not be able to practice physical distancing, self-isolation or good hygiene.

### THE 5 SIMPLE RULES TO KEEP YOURSELF AND YOUR FAMILY SAFE

1. Always wash your hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer. Proper hand washing should take around 20 seconds and cover all parts of your hands – fingers, thumbs, between fingers, under nails, palms and the back of your hands. Sing the happy birthday song twice while you wash your hands to time 20 seconds. This will kill any viruses that are on your hands and stop them getting into your body.
2. Don't touch your eyes, nose and mouth – this increases the chance of passing the virus from your hands into your body.
3. The virus spreads from person to person so try to limit your contact with other people. Stay home and avoid bars, restaurants and public events. If you do go out, try to keep a safe distance from others. Imagine you are holding a big broom - you are a safe distance if you can't touch anyone with it. Avoid shaking hands, holding hands, cheek kisses or hugs.
4. If you cough or sneeze, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your bent elbow – and wash your hands if you do cough or sneeze into your hands.
5. Stay at home if you feel unwell and have a dry cough and fever, or shortness of breath and contact your local health services or Ministry of Health hotline. This reduces the chance you might spread the virus to others.

IF THERE ARE QUESTIONS OR RUMOURS SPREADING IN YOUR COUNTRY CONTACT [EVA.ERLACH@IFRC.ORG](mailto:EVA.ERLACH@IFRC.ORG) AND WE CAN TRY TO ADDRESS THEM IN THIS FACT SHEET.