

# A THREE STEP COVID-19 SELF PROTECTION PLAN

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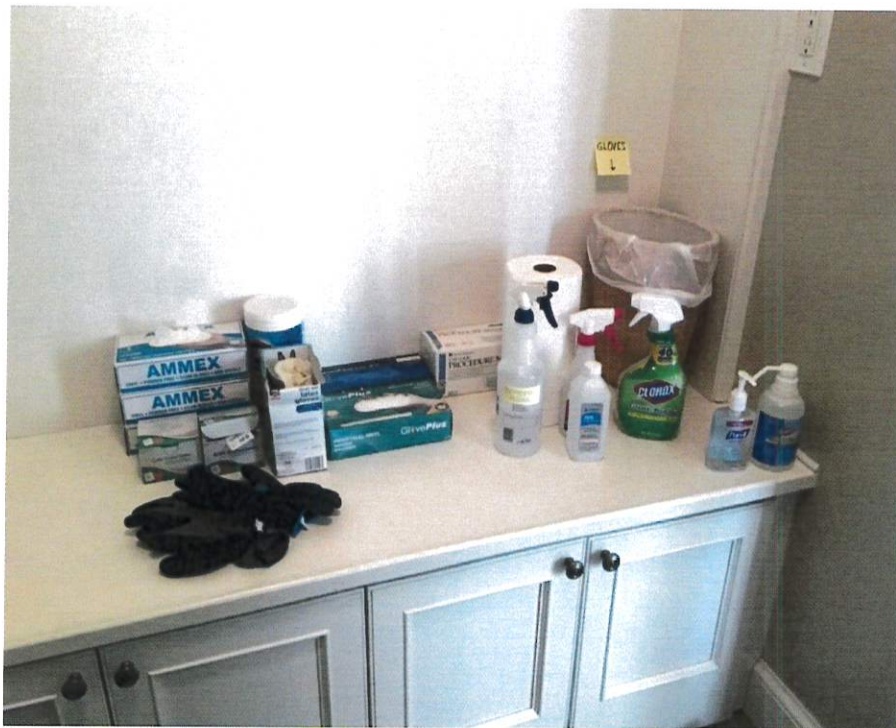
**CO**rona Virus **D**isease **2019** (COVID-19) is, like SARS-CoV and MERS-CoV, a novel corona virus that has managed to travel from animals to humans and from humans to humans. It may be capable of living outside the body on inanimate surfaces for up to nine days. COVID-19 has a mortality rate currently estimated at 3%. It is particularly dangerous to those 60 years and older, those with medical illnesses, and those who are immune compromised.

Efforts to contain COVID-19 have lagged behind its spread because of the early lack of test kits and because COVID-19's symptomatic similarity to influenza makes it difficult for people to know when to self-quarantine. Given the risk of infection, particularly to high-risk groups, self-protection from COVID-19 is important for your own safety as well as for the safety of others. Self-protection from COVID-19 is likely to help contain its spread.

- 1. Make your home a COVID-19-free zone by creating a decontamination area near your door.** I recommend establishing an area near your door to keep hand sanitizer, gloves, masks, and disinfecting supplies. Before leaving your home, be sure you have hand sanitizer and/or gloves, and pack a mask in case you come in close proximity (less than six feet) with people who may not be practicing COVID-19 self-protection. The mask will offer some protection if they have the virus and if they cough or sneeze.
- 2. While you are away from home:**
  - lean your hands frequently with soap and water or with hand sanitizer.
  - if you choose to wear gloves, I recommend you wear **disposable or waterproof gloves** (most disposable gloves can be worn while using a touch screen) and that you **clean your hands while wearing the gloves** and clean your hands before replacing the gloves if you have removed them.
  - use a mask if you are within six feet of someone who may have COVID-19 in case they cough or sneeze.

- Upon your return home, discard the disposable gloves and clean your hands or, if you are wearing reusable waterproof gloves, clean and store the waterproof gloves, remove them, and clean your hands. If you used a mask while you were out, discard it when you return.
3. **Decontaminate all items you bring into the home that may have been handled by** washing with soap and water or by spraying with a disinfectant or with isopropyl alcohol in an all purpose spray bottle before you put them away (Remember, COVID-19 can remain viable for several days without a host).
- Fresh vegetables should be stored in a separate drawer or shelf in the refrigerator, handled with careful hand washing, and cooked before eating.
  - Remember to disinfect telephones, tablets, and laptops.
  - Touch screens can be cleaned with alcohol swabs if you prefer not to spray them.
  - Clothing that has been coughed or sneezed on can be cleaned with laundry detergent.

**Example of a designated decontamination area:**



I recommend you take these safety precautions, or others like them, for your sake as well as for the sake of those around you. There's much we have to learn about COVID-19, including how infectious it is, how dangerous it is, and how to contain it. Hopefully, COVID-19 will quickly be contained or will quickly run its course. In the meantime, I wish you good health and safe travels!