

ALL PEOPLE ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ONE ANOTHER

A RESOURCE ON CARING FOR THE SICK IN TIMES OF CRISIS



We are deeply concerned about how the coronavirus (COVID-19) will impact the most vulnerable among us, and how misplaced fear can lead to xenophobia and racism. Jewish tradition teaches the importance that people should not feel isolated, especially during times of illness. The Talmud (*Berachot 5b*) tells of a story where Rabbi Yochanon was suffering from an illness when he was visited by a colleague, who reached out his hand in support, and with that gesture, Rabbi Yochanon recovered. We learn here that healing cannot and should not be an isolated experience. Even those with the greatest ability to help others require the support of those around them in times of need. Further, we know as a people that vulnerable members of our community require even more support and thoughtfulness in times of distress.

WHAT IS CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)?

This new virus was initially described by authorities as a new strain of pneumonia, however, it was later confirmed to be a new coronavirus. On February 11 the World Health Organization announced the official name for the disease as 'COVID-19'. "*Having a name matters to prevent the use of other names that can be inaccurate or stigmatizing,*" he said. "*It also gives us a standard format to use for any future coronavirus outbreaks.*" The best way to avoid the spread of the COVID-19 is to wash your hands often and practice good cough etiquette.

We encourage you to ask the following questions to help guide you and your community during this time:

- **What are the immediate needs vs. the long term needs?** Which communities are most in need of healthcare, quarantine support, etc. right now? What long term help will people need now and later? What research needs to be supported to mitigate the impacts if another outbreak happens in the future?
- **What are the impacts beyond illness?** What is the effect on people who live paycheck to paycheck or on those who rely on school lunches if schools are closed? For people living alone? For the elderly? For people with other illnesses who rely on medical assistance or treatments? For healthcare providers? For people caring for children, the elderly, and those in need of care?
- **What are my values?** What is most important? Saving lives? Improving the wellbeing of those under quarantine? Improving global health initiatives? Supporting communities who are marginalized?
- **What do I need to improve my well-being and the well-being of those around me?** What can you be doing to relax, find joy, and stay calm? How can you help others who are nervous, anxious, or struggling find calm?

LEARN

Asian-Americans, and in particular Chinese-Americans, have been facing vitriol and alienation since the COVID-19 has been named as originating in Wuhan, China. We invite you to learn about the impact on these communities in order to help disrupt and address issues of hate and bias. Xenophobia has a long history of being connected to epidemics, as Edith Bracho-Sanchez, assistant professor of pediatrics at Columbia University Irving Medical Center, who has worked on health issues involving international borders says "As human beings, we are afraid of the things we don't know, but our response should be to educate ourselves, not to further spread and give oxygen to fears and misunderstandings." Read articles about Anti-Chinese Racism and consider starting conversations amongst your family and friends around how to support and build knowledge to prevent racism and hate crimes.

- [As Coronavirus Spreads, So Does Anti-Chinese Racism](#)
- [Chinese businesses in New York City hit hard by coronavirus anxiety](#)
- [The coronavirus spreads racism against—and among—ethnic Chinese](#)

TAKE ACTION

PREPARE YOURSELF AND YOUR COMMUNITY:

- **Preparing for Coronavirus to Strike the US:** Your neighbors need you to prepare—especially your elderly neighbors, your neighbors who work at hospitals, your neighbors with chronic illnesses, and your neighbors who may not have the means or the time to prepare because of lack of resources or time.
- **Preventing Spread In Communities:** Currently a vaccine or drug is not available for COVID-19. Community-based interventions such as school dismissals, event cancellations, social distancing, and creating employee plans to work remotely can help slow the spread of COVID-19. Individuals can practice everyday prevention measures like frequent hand washing, staying home when sick, and covering coughs and sneezes.
- **Mitigating the impact of Isolation:** Isolation may present its own unique challenges if quarantines, school and workplace closures, or travel advisories are in effect, or if people are too nervous to leave their houses. How can you and those around you stay connected to friends and loved ones? If you are able, ask for your neighbors' phone numbers or emails, especially the elderly, so you can check in on them if you or they can't go out. Set up video coworking or hangout times, and help your neighbors. Find other meaningful ways to fill time that help counter isolation and fear.

VOLUNTEER:

- **Find ways to support quarantined individuals.** The use of quarantines is crucial to helping control the spread of any infectious disease, including COVID-19. However, extended quarantine times can be very difficult for the people who are quarantined. They are unable to go to work, shop for necessities, or even see their families in some cases. Support includes supporting individuals once the quarantine is over, especially if they lost income, housing, or employment.
- **Reach out to local Asian-American organizations** to see how you can help reduce stigma and stand in solidarity with them. Examples include: [OCA - Asian Pacific American Advocates](#) in Washington, D.C. or [CAAAY Organizing Asian Communities](#) in New York.

GIVE TZEDAKAH (CHARITY):

- **Fund organizations that are working in areas with poor access to regular medical services** as well as organizations specifically fighting the coronavirus such as [UNICEF USA](#) or the [Coronavirus Relief Fund](#). People without access to regular medical care are more prone to have existing medical needs that make them more susceptible to infections of all types. Supporting healthy populations will help limit the spread of all viruses and other infections.
- **Host a Pop-up Giving Circle** - Make a donation, deepen your understanding, and combat isolation by hosting an in-person or a virtual pop-up giving circle to bring your friends, family, or community together and donate funds to organizations working on COVID-19 and related causes. Download the [facilitator guide](#) and [participant workbook](#), which walk you through an interactive, 90-minute exercise to explore your values, pool your money, and make a decision to donate your money. If you have questions or need help with a pop-up or larger giving circle reach out to hello@amplifiergiving.org.
- **Give Unrestricted Funds** - we've learned from past disasters that restricting your fund to a certain area means organizations are unable to adjust as the situation changes.
- **Consider sustaining or recurring gifts** to ensure ongoing work on healthcare and related issues.
- **Let others know where and how much you gave** to continue the conversation, connect to people asking the same questions and supporting similar causes, and make giving easier for those around you.