

# The Impact of COVID-19 on the Elderly

WCT COVID-19 Task Force



# The COVID-19 pandemic

- Although the novel coronavirus does not exclusively target the elderly and those with underlying health conditions, these are groups that are at higher risk of suffering from a more serious form of the disease.
- Data from Europe has shown that some young people have also been seriously affected. So, all of us have to be vigilant.
- We share a collective responsibility to shield those who are more vulnerable.



# Remember



01

80% of those who contract COVID-19 are likely to have minimal or no symptoms at all.

02

The remaining 20% will exhibit more serious symptoms that will require the patients to be hospitalised.

03

Of these, the disease may prove fatal for 5%.

04

It is the elderly and those with underlying health conditions who are most vulnerable.



# Remember



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However, everyone is at risk. So, even if you are fit and healthy, you should follow instructions.

06

Wash your hands, stay at home and practice social distancing.

07

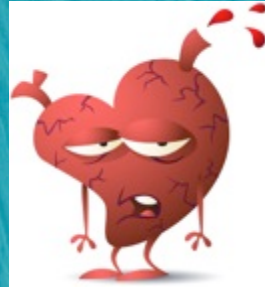
Let's shield ourselves and those who are vulnerable, from the virus. It is our duty.



# Which are the high-risk groups?

Those suffering from -

1. Chronic (long-term) respiratory diseases, such as
  - Asthma
  - Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
  - Emphysema or bronchitis
  - Tuberculosis (TB)
2. Chronic heart disease
3. Chronic kidney disease
4. Chronic liver disease, such as hepatitis



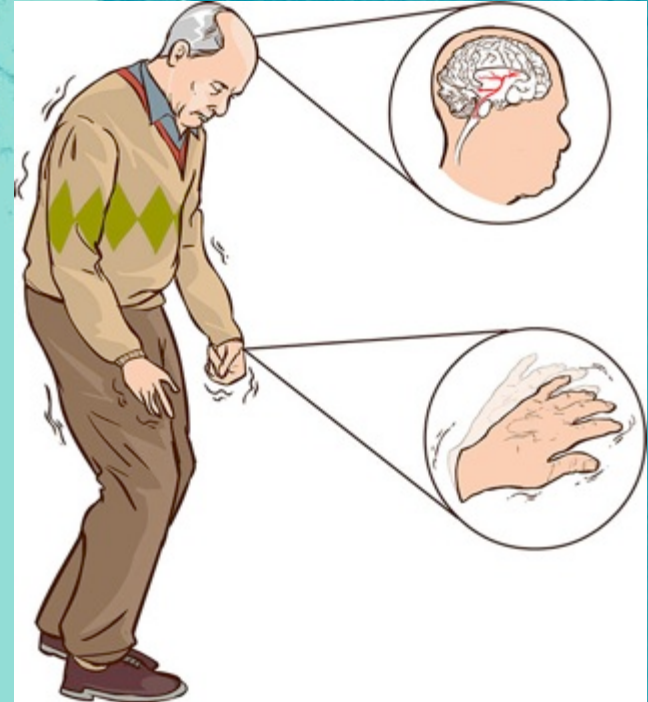
# Which are the high-risk groups?

5. Chronic neurological conditions, such as

- Parkinson's disease
- Motor neuron disease
- Multiple Sclerosis (MS)
- A learning disability or cerebral palsy

6. Diabetes

7. Spleen conditions - for example, sickle cell disease or if spleen is surgically removed



# Which are the high-risk groups?

8. Weak immune system as a result of medical conditions, such as:
  - HIV and AIDS
  - Medication such as steroid tablets or chemotherapy
9. Being seriously overweight (a body mass index (BMI) of 40 or above)
10. Pregnancy





# The elderly citizens

**Old people are at risk because:**

They usually suffer from accompanying health conditions such as heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, lung disease, neurological conditions, etc.

Their immune system may not be as resilient to infections.

It is harder for them to totally self-isolate as they often depend on and/or live with other people.

# Challenges for the elderly

- Many will have developed long standing routines **which could get** affected by the lockdown.
- Lack of house help may make it more difficult for the **elderly to cope.**
- Old people could develop dietary or other health **problems due to** unavailability of certain foods and medicines.
- Isolation could become more amplified for old people **due to their** lack of familiarity with current technology, and therefore, **inability to** stay in touch with their near and dear. This could **make it a more** emotionally challenging time for them.

# What can we do to support them?



**Respect** the fact that that they may think differently from us and accept this.

**Reassure** them of what is happening and that things will get better.

Reinforce **positive messages**.



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Respect their **routines**.

Help them to **stay connected** with their friends and family.

Never hesitate to seek help, if needed, to **look after them**

**Be patient** with the elderly, as just like you, they may also feel fear and frustration under present circumstances.



# Bond with them

- Use your time under lockdown to spend quality time with them.
- In the busy and social lives that we normally lead, we don't invest enough time in bonding with our elders.
- Involve them in discussions and activities.
- Now is the chance to learn how to cook some of those lip-smacking recipes from your grandmothers or grandaunts!



# When your aged relatives live away from you

- This may cause you anxiety at not being able to visit or care for them. It is normal to feel guilty.
- Try and use video calls or regular phone calls as a way to keep in touch and keep a tab on them.
- Reassure yourself and them that this is only temporary.



# When your aged relatives live away from you

- Check if their neighbours, or some of your family members or friends who may live nearby to them, could lend a helping hand or keep an eye on them.
- Remember, old people are more resourceful and capable than we give them credit for!





# Adopt an elder

- If you know of any elderly people who live nearby, and who might need help and assistance during this time, volunteer to do so.
- They may need help with grocery shopping, medications, or simply an empathetic ear.
- Remember to follow all social distancing norms while interacting with them.



# Adopt an elder

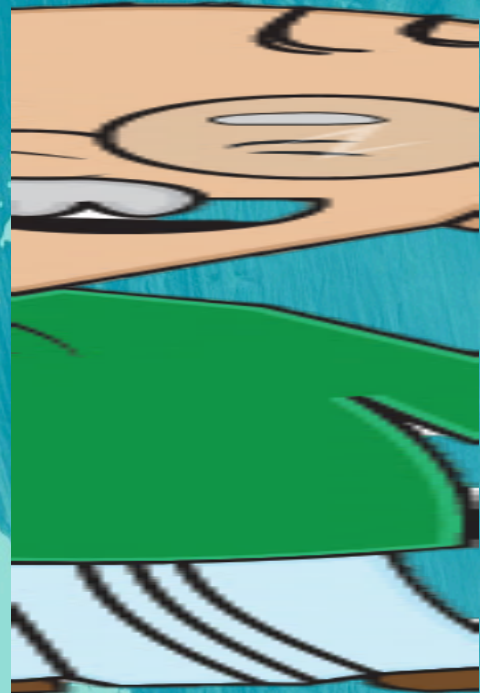
- Isolation can be scary for any one, especially for the old and alone.
- Make an effort to call your elderly family members to let them know you are there for them. That will lift their spirits.





# Be positive

- Many elderly patients with COVID-19 have and are recovering well, and will be fine.
- The elderly have endured many things, have more experience, and are more resilient than we think. Give them credit.
- Learn from their experience.
- No harm in letting them know, again and again, that it's going to be okay, and that they are loved.







**Love knows no boundaries.  
Take care of the elderly,  
family or not.**

