



# COVID -19

CORONAVIRUS



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## A Brief Introduction to the Hutterian Safety Council and the COVID-19 Task-force

### Who is the Hutterite Safety Council and the COVID-19 Task-force?

The Hutterian Safety Council (HSC) is an organization representing Lehrerleut, Dariusleut, and Schmiedeleut Hutterite communities tasked with developing a culture of safety in all Hutterite communities. The COVID-19 Task-force, under the umbrella of the HSC, will coordinate the Hutterite response to the COVID-19 pandemic presently spreading around the globe.

### What do we hope to accomplish?

- Disseminate **reliable information** and practical examples of how communities can cope with the present and future challenges.
- Provide **encouragement** and hope to all our communities in a troubled world.

### How do we hope to accomplish this?

- Share daily/weekly bulletins like this one. (Please share these bulletins freely and widely with family, friends and everyone in your community.)
- Communicate with local and provincial/state government officials to ensure our message is accurate and consistent with their efforts.
- Arrange for connections to available resources that Hutterite communities can provide to our neighbours within local communities. Examples include supporting local blood donor drives, and, if local food supply becomes a concern, food donations. As time passes, more opportunities may arise in other areas, such as making medical face masks.

### What is COVID-19?

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus. Most people infected with the COVID-19 virus will experience mild to moderate respiratory illness and recover without requiring special treatment. Older people, and those with underlying medical problems like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, or cancer are more likely to develop serious, life threatening illness.

### Should we be concerned?

We need to be responsible and informed, but resist giving in to panic. The people most at risk in our communities are the elderly and those already living with illness. Our main concern must be protecting the vulnerable. Therefore, even if we may not become ill ourselves, our duty is to respond in ways that protect the elderly and the sick.

### How does COVID-19 spread?

The virus is spread through close contact (within 2 meters/6 feet) with an infected person who is coughing or sneezing. You can also get COVID-19 by touching objects contaminated with the virus and then touching your mouth, eyes, or nose.

## Will the virus affect our communities?

The risk of the coronavirus reaching our communities is very real, given our interactions with mainstream society, especially if we don't limit non-essential travel. Health authorities are advising us to assume it is already present in our communities, and to act accordingly. Once a community member is infected with COVID-19, it can spread quickly because of our close-knit lifestyle. It is our collective responsibility to do everything possible to slow its spread and protect our most vulnerable members. Community leaders must take the initiative, ensuring steps are taken to protect communities. The task force is specifically in place to provide the information that leadership needs to make well-informed, wise decisions.

## How do we hope to stop or slow the virus from spreading?

At this time, there is no cure for COVID-19. However, as a community and as individuals, there are many ways to prevent or slow the spread of COVID-19. The most effective preventative measures are:

- Frequent washing of hands with soap and water. This should be done after coughing or sneezing, when caring for a sick person, before, during or after you prepare food, before eating, after toilet use, or when hands are visibly dirty. When soap and water is not available use an alcohol based hand sanitizer.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing and dispose of tissues after single use. A cupped elbow also is effective.
- Observing physical distancing (6 feet is currently recommended) while intentionally seeking other ways to connect with people. Physical isolation can be lonely and depressing, so we must be creative in showing our love and support in other ways.
- Observe government guidance on gathering size limits to properly align with state/provincial public health orders. Keep in mind, this may change.
- Stress is very hard on the immune system. Moderating your media and information intake regarding COVID-19 is important. Getting enough sleep, maintaining a healthy diet, and exercising are all vital to strengthening your body's ability to respond to the virus.
- Avoid sharing household and personal care items (i.e., dishes, towels, pillows, toothbrushes, etc.). After use of these items, wash them thoroughly with soap and warm water, place them in the dishwasher for cleaning, or wash them in your washing machine.

## Conclusion

The COVID-19 situation is a crisis and therefore an intense and anxious time. Reach out to people in isolation. We hope that all of us remain healthy and safe in the days to come. Be gentle, patient, kind and supportive of one another.

Any questions or concerns please contact HSC directly at:  
[hbcovid19@gmail.com](mailto:hbcovid19@gmail.com)

