



PRISON LAW OFFICE

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Hello:

You wrote to us about problems in the Riverside jails. This letter explains what we can and can't do. Any documents that you sent are returned. We apologize for sending you a form letter, but it is the only way we can quickly reply, given the large number of letters we receive.

We filed *Gray v. County of Riverside* in 2013 to improve medical and mental health care in the jails and to stop the county from discriminating based on disability. It is a class action lawsuit, which means that it covers all people in the jails in these areas. If you are in jail in Riverside, you are automatically covered by the lawsuit. In 2016, the County settled the case with us by agreeing to make many changes to improve health care and conditions for people with disabilities (there is no money pay-out). We monitor them to make sure they are making the changes. So far, they have made many improvements but nowhere near enough.

The coronavirus or COVID-19 pandemic has had a great impact everywhere, including in the Riverside jails. As you probably know, more than 100 people in the jails have tested positive for the virus, and dozens of staff. We were very concerned that the County did not make enough changes to protect people in jail from getting COVID-19, so we filed a motion with the Court. We won the motion. On April 15, the judge agreed that the County has not done enough to separate people for "physical distancing," or to take care of people who are most vulnerable to the virus (older people and those with serious medical conditions), or to make sure people can keep clean and safe. We are now working out the details of what the County has to do.

Unfortunately we cannot help with individual cases. We are focusing our limited resources in trying to get the County to make changes for everyone, especially the people most vulnerable to the virus. But we hope that you will help us understand current conditions in the jails. Would you complete the enclosed survey and return it to us? We will not share your answers or name with county officials unless you say we can. We send a postage pre-paid envelope you can use to send the survey back to us.

Please note that while we will carefully read every survey response we receive, we may not be able to write back to you. Thank you in advance for your time. We wish you the best.

The Prison Law Office

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Information about COVID-19

Attached to this letter is some information about coronavirus and COVID-19 that was prepared by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) for people in the state prisons. We hope it is helpful to you.

If you have flu-like symptoms – a fever (high temperature), cough, or shortness of breath – you should let jail staff, including medical staff, know right away.

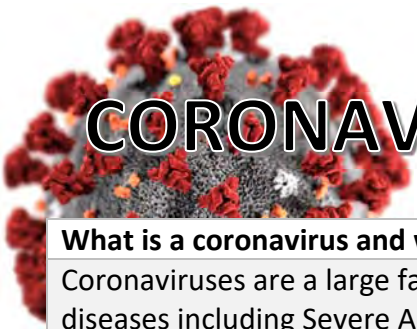
Important Advice Regarding COVID-19 / Coronavirus

Public health experts say it is crucial to avoid close contact with (stay six feet from) people as much as possible in order to avoid spreading the virus, and to reduce the chances of catching it. They also say that you should wear your mask (cloth face covering) as much as possible when you are around other people. Many people who have the virus and are contagious have no symptoms or only minor ones, so you might not know if you are infected and at risk of spreading it to others. It is safest to assume that anyone can have the virus, and to **reduce contact and wear your mask** in order to protect yourself and the most vulnerable people (the elderly and people with preexisting medical conditions).

If you have symptoms of COVID-19 / Coronavirus, or have symptoms of the flu, you should let staff know immediately.

Please take care, stay well, and look out for each other.

Prison Law Office



CORONAVIRUS/COVID-19 FACTS AND FAQs

What is a coronavirus and what is COVID-19?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that cause illnesses ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases including Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS). COVID-19 is the infectious disease caused by the most recently discovered coronavirus. This new virus and disease were unknown before the outbreak began in Wuhan, China, in December 2019.

How did this virus get its name?

On Feb. 11, 2020, the World Health Organization announced the official name for the new coronavirus virus would be COVID-19. "CO" stands for "corona," "VI" stands for "virus," D stands for "disease" and 19 indicates the year the virus was first discovered. Before this, the virus was referred to as the "2019 novel coronavirus," which means it was a new strain not previously identified in humans.

Where did COVID-19 come from?

The World Health Organization states that coronaviruses are zoonotic, which means they are transmitted from animals to people. A specific animal source of COVID-19 has not been identified, but the virus has been linked to a large seafood and live animal market.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), individuals diagnosed with this coronavirus experience a mild to severe respiratory illness. Symptoms include fever, cough and shortness of breath. Individuals with severe complications from the virus often develop pneumonia in both lungs.

How does the virus spread?

The virus is spread person-to-person. According to the CDC, spread is happening mainly between people who are in close contact (within 6 feet) of each other via respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. The droplets land on the noses and mouths of other people, who then inhale them. The CDC says it may be possible for the virus to spread by touching a surface or object with the virus and then a person touching their mouth, nose or eyes, but this is not thought to be the main method of spread. As the virus was discovered just a few months ago, more research is required to learn more about the spread pattern of the virus. The incubation period ranges from 2 to 14 days after exposure (most cases occurring at approximately 5 days.) People are thought to be most contagious when they are most symptomatic (the sickest.) Some spread might be possible before people show symptoms.

Is there a cure for the virus?

There is no specific medication to treat COVID-19; supportive care is provided to treat symptoms. There is currently no vaccine to protect against COVID-19. Individuals should take care to avoid being exposed to the virus through hygiene and sanitary practices. Please seek immediate medical care to relieve symptoms if infected with the virus.

How do I protect myself and others?

There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19 or medication to directly treat COVID-19. The best way to protect yourself is to avoid being exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19. The CDC recommends maintaining personal preventative actions such as:

- Avoiding close contact with those who are sick
- Not touching your eyes, mouth or nose, especially with unwashed hands
- Washing your hands often with soap and warm water for last least 20 seconds
- Clean objects and surfaces that are frequently touched
- Limit your exposure to others if you are sick
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue
- Do not share food, drinks, utensils, or toothbrushes

What should I do if I think I have COVID-19?

Avoid direct contact with other people and immediately request to be seen by health care if you feel sick with a fever, cough or difficulty breathing. Make sure to give your provider details of any symptoms and potential contact with individuals who may have recently traveled.

Will I be tested for COVID-19?

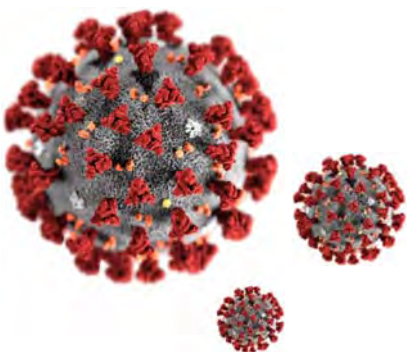
You will be tested if your provider suspects you have COVID-19.

What is CDCR/CCHCS doing to prepare for a potential outbreak?

CDCR and CCHCS are dedicated to the safety of everyone who lives, works, and visits our state prisons. We have longstanding emergency response plans in place to address communicable disease outbreaks such as influenza, measles, mumps, norovirus, as well as coronavirus. Based on guidance from the CDC, and to ensure we are as prepared as possible to respond to any exposure to COVID-19 specifically, we are building upon the robust influenza infection control guidelines already in place at each institution. These guidelines clearly define procedures for prevention of transmission, management of suspected and confirmed cases including isolation and quarantine protocols, surveillance of patients, and routine cleaning and disinfection procedures.

If there is a suspected case of COVID-19, we will follow the policies and procedures already in place for modified programming for any affected housing units and areas. We will continue to update guidelines for COVID-19 response based on CDC recommendations and will maintain cooperation with local and state health departments and the law enforcement community.

COVID-19 is new, but the most important aspect of preparedness is remaining calm. Don't panic. We understand staff, families, and those who visit state prisons as program providers or volunteers may have concerns and anxiety about COVID-19, but please be assured that there is no need for alarm. All should follow the precautions recommended by CDC, which expand upon precautions advised during cold and flu season. The spread of COVID-19 can be significantly reduced with proper infection control measures and good individual hygiene practices.



Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.



Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Be sure to lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.



Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the "Happy Birthday" song from beginning to end twice.



Rinse hands well under clean, running water.

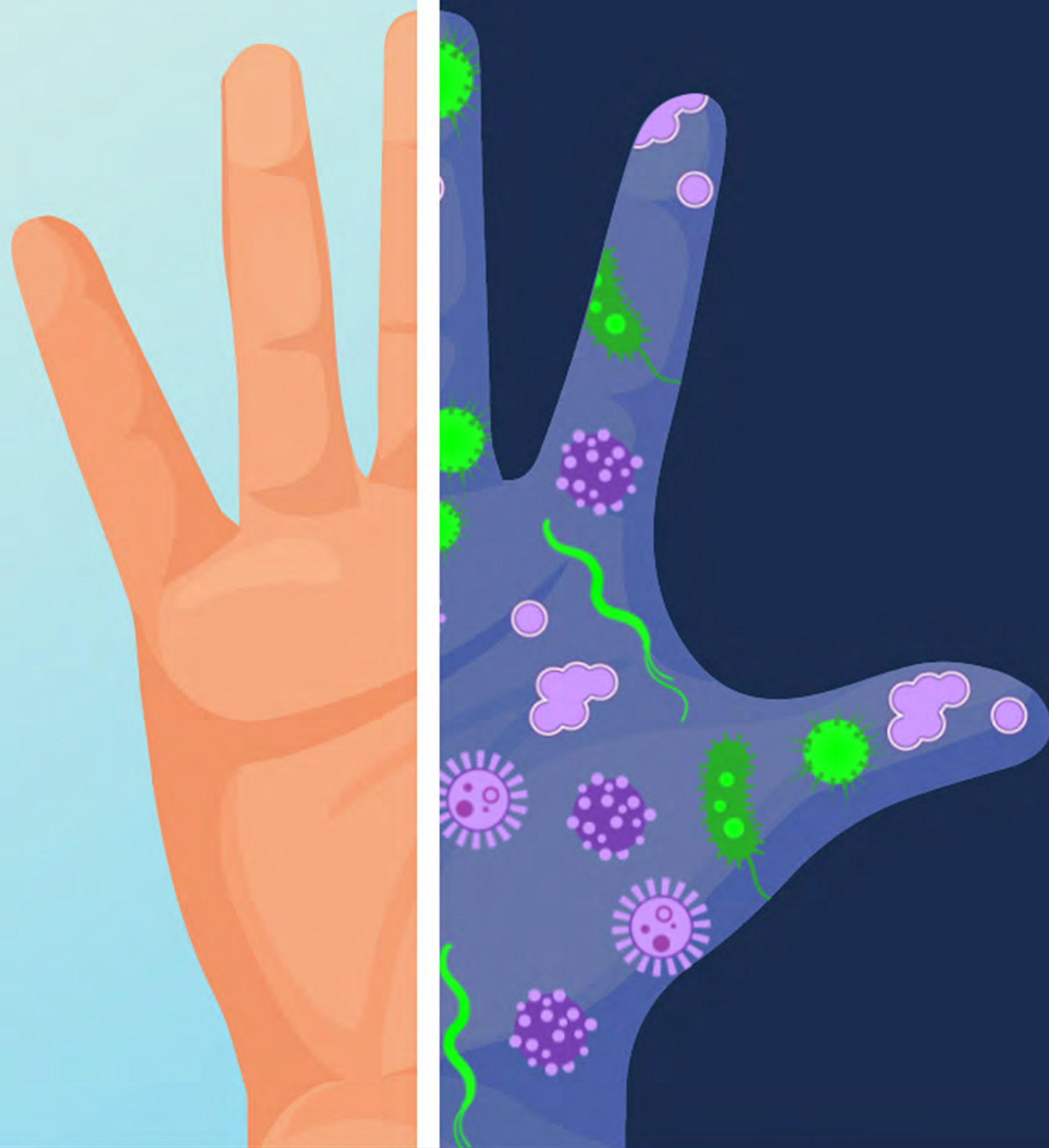


Dry hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

**WASH YOUR HANDS
FREQUENTLY**

Help prevent the spread of illness... Wash your Hands!

Your hands carry
germs you can't see



Wash your hands

www.cdc.gov/handwashing





PREVENT THE SPREAD OF ILLNESS

Good health habits like covering your cough and washing your hands often can help stop the spread of germs and prevent respiratory illnesses. Protect yourself and others from viral illnesses and help stop the spread of germs.

Avoid close contact

Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.

Keep your germs to yourself

As much as possible, stay in your housing area away from others when you are sick. This will help prevent spreading your illness to others.

Cover your nose and mouth

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. It may prevent those around you from getting sick. Flu and other serious respiratory illnesses are spread by cough, sneezing, or unclean hands.

Handwashing: clean hands save lives!

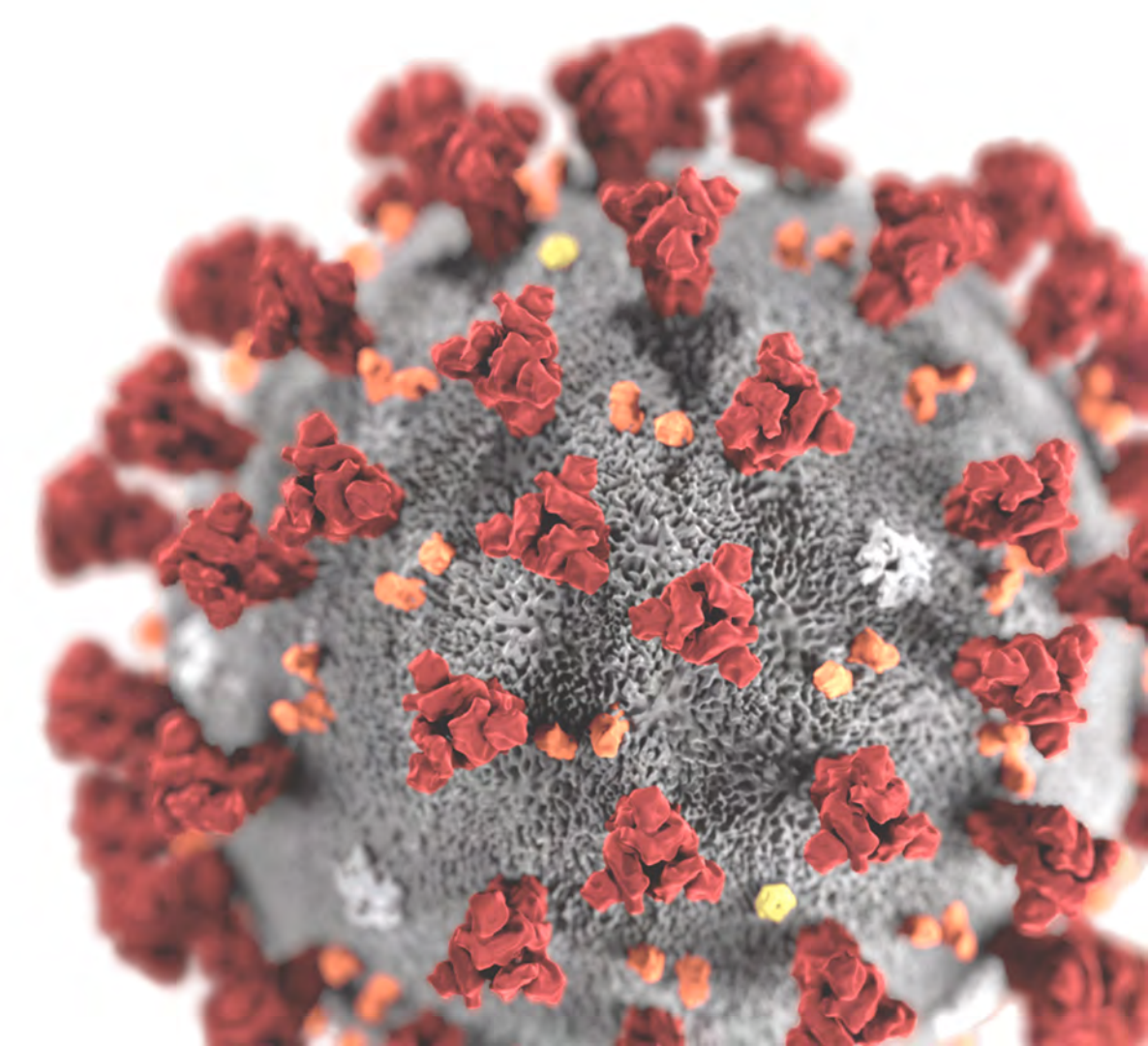
Washing your hands is easy, and it's one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of germs. Clean hands can stop germs from spreading from one person to another and throughout an entire community. If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer.

Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth

Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth.

Practice other good health habits

Clean frequently touched surfaces especially when you or someone you share space with is ill. Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.



Patients with COVID-19 have experienced mild to severe respiratory illness.

Symptoms* can include

FEVER



COUGH



***Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure.**

SHORTNESS OF BREATH



Seek medical advice if you develop symptoms, and have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19 or if you live in or have recently been in an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19.

If you have symptoms of COVID-19, please complete a form 7362 and let someone know immediately.

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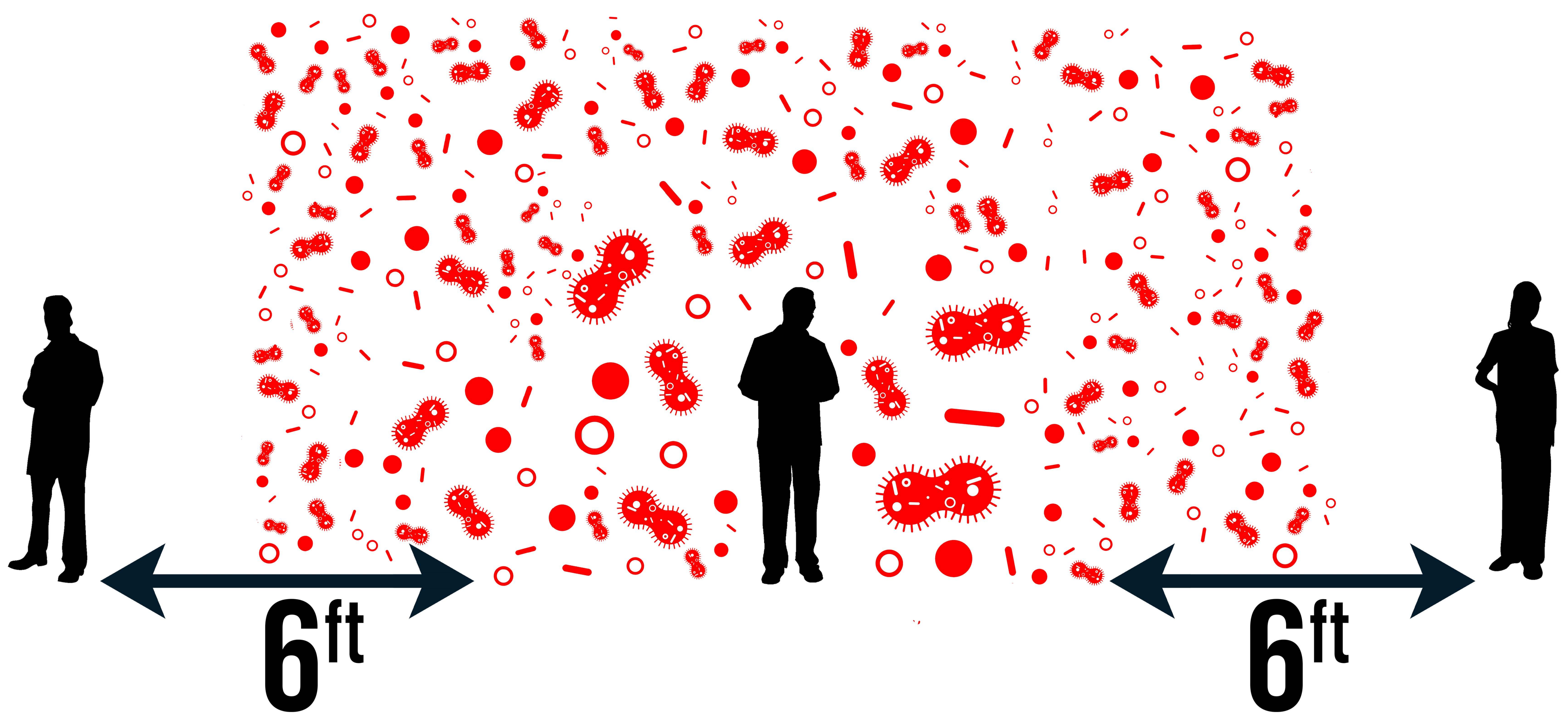
PRACTICE SOCIAL DISTANCING

THE DISTANCE BETWEEN YOU AND COVID-19 IS



To curb the spread of COVID-19, CDCR and the California Department of Public Health recommend keeping a six foot distance between yourself and others at all times.

SOCIAL DISTANCING



The distance between
you and COVID-19 is

SIX FEET

GENERAL INFORMATION

Name: _____

Booking Number: _____

Jail: _____

Building and Cell/Dorm Number: _____

How long have you been at this jail? _____

COVID-19 EDUCATION

1. What information have you been given about COVID-19?
Who gave you this information? Was it in writing, on the TV, verbal?
2. Could you understand it? If not, why not? (circle one) YES NO

PHYSICAL DISTANCING

3. Are you in a cell or dorm? (circle one) CELL DORM
4. How many people are in your cell or dorm? How far away is your bed from others?
5. Can you stay six feet away from everyone? (circle one) YES NO
If **no**, why not?

6. Where do you have meals? If people eat together, how many? Have there been any changes in meals? Please explain.

CLEANLINESS

7. Do you have access to a sink to wash your hands? How often?
8. How much soap do you get? How often do you get it? Is it free?
9. How often can you use the shower?
10. How many people shower at one time? How close to each other?
11. How often are the showers cleaned? Who cleans the showers? What cleaning products do they use? How do you know?
12. How often is your cell or dorm cleaned? Did you do it or somebody else? What cleaning products were you given? How often are given cleaning products?

STAFFING

13. Have there been any changes in staffing at the jail? Do staff treat you any differently now? Please explain.
14. When staff escorts you or others, do staff wear masks and gloves? Please explain.
15. Are you give masks or gloves? If yes, how many? Do you reuse them? If yes, how do you clean them?

PHONE CALLS

16. Are you allowed phone calls? (circle one) YES NO
If **no**, why not?
17. How many free phone calls have you been given?
18. How is the phone cleaned? How do you know?

MEDICAL & MENTAL HEALTH CARE

20. Have there been any changes in the how the jail is providing medical or mental health care because of the COVID-19 emergency? Please explain.
21. Do you currently have any medical or mental health care needs that are not being met? Please explain.

ATTORNEY CONTACT

22. Have you been able to communicate with your attorney? Please explain.

DISABILITY

23. Do you have any physical disabilities? For example, are you Deaf, hard of hearing, or have limited mobility, vision, or speech? Please explain.

24. Is there any disability-related help you need **during the COVID-19 pandemic**? (circle one) YES NO

If **yes**, please explain.

GENERAL

25. Do you have masks or cloth face coverings? (circle one) YES NO

If yes, how many? Were you told how to wear it and keep it clean? Is it effective?

26. Is there anything else we should know about conditions at the jail in relation to the COVID-19 emergency?

PERMISSION TO SHARE YOUR ANSWERS WITH JAIL

27. May we share your name and answers to this survey with county representatives and people who run the jails?

YES

NO

28. If **no**, may we share your answers to this survey with the county **without** telling them your name? That is, may we share your story anonymously?

YES

NO

**Thank you for filling out our survey. We greatly appreciate it.
Please send your survey to us in the enclosed, postage prepaid
envelope.**