

Protesting in the Time of COVID-19

Public Health Recommendations on How to Protest Safer

PART I : BEFORE THE PROTEST EVENT

CONTINGENCY ARRANGEMENTS

- **Identify someone who is not attending the protest** who you can call in a medical emergency, can contact legal assistance on your behalf, or arrange for bail in case you are arrested. Let them know when they should expect your return and keep in touch when possible. Prepare for contingencies such as ensuring any vulnerable dependents (pets, children, elderly, etc.) in your care will have adequate care or supervision if you are detained for several hours or overnight
- **Identify at least 1 buddy or a small group of 3-4 persons** that you can coordinate with to attend the event together and leave together to ensure everyone, safe, well, and accounted for
- **Prepare for the possibility that calling 911 may alert police and firefighters as part of the emergency response.** 911 Dispatch Systems can vary depending on your area but many systems integrate Emergency Medical Services (EMS), police, and fire to coordinate and respond to emergencies. Informing 911 of your location for where to send an ambulance may inadvertently inform police of your location as well. This may factor into your decision of how comfortable you feel calling 911 when you have been injured in the midst of a protest. If you experience a life-threatening medical emergency, regardless of your situation, it is critical that you call for emergency medical help
- **Prepare for the possibility that traditional EMTs and paramedics may be unable to reach you in the midst of an ongoing protest (especially if there is active violence)** until everyone has been cleared out and the chaos has calmed. This is due to longstanding safety protocols that prevent medical personnel from charging into high-risk situations that result in no one being able to provide medical care. All medical personnel are trained to assess the situation and level of risk so they are able to both provide life-saving care to the patient without creating a situation where they themselves become another patient in need of care
 - Traditional EMTs and paramedics are emergency medical personnel who are typically employed by established institutions, such as hospitals and professional ambulance services
 - 911 EMS systems and protocols are often coordinated such that in high-risk situations, police officers must clear the scene and declare it safe before traditional EMTs and paramedics are allowed to proceed to the patient and provide medical attention

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- **If you need medical attention or help during a protest, consider flagging down a Street Medic.** Street medics are loosely affiliated medical personnel with various levels of training and have a long-standing tradition of providing medical assistance at protests and mass gatherings where traditional medical attention may not be available. They often are often licensed EMTs, paramedics, physicians, medical students, or even a fellow protestor with basic first aid training, and may be identified by a red cross somewhere on their person. Due to their role in providing assistance to protestors, however, they are also often vulnerable to being targeted by police
 - **Some street medics may also be trained in providing psychological first aid** if you are experiencing PTSD symptoms, feeling triggered, anxious, or overwhelmed.
 - Most injuries experienced at a protest will be minor or non life-threatening, but in the case of a medical emergency, Street Medics can help talk you through your options. Given the sensitive and political nature of protest participation, a Street Medic can help facilitate direct hospital transport without triggering the traditional 911 systems, or discuss ways ambulance transport might be feasible with the patient's consent
- **Bring sufficient external battery power to stay in communication and call for medical help if necessary.** Consider using encrypted secure communication with your group (e.g. via the Signal app) to make emergency calls in case medical attention is needed and/or communicate the severity of your wounds if treatment is needed
 - **Consider having your health insurance card and information ready** in case of a medical emergency that requires a visit to the hospital. However, being uninsured should *never* stop you from seeking medical attention, and you are not legally allowed to be turned away at any Emergency Department for life-saving care. If you are able to afford medical insurance, having that information ready may make things easier during an emergency
 - **Make sure you have both electronic and written contact information** for your protest group, legal advocacy, and emergency contacts. Consider writing important contact numbers in a discrete location on your body as both your phone or physical paper may be damaged or confiscated
- **Consider identifying where the nearest public restrooms** may be available along your planned protest route. Many restaurants may not be permitting use of their bathrooms. Remember to try and physically distance at least 6 feet apart even when in line for bathroom facilities

WHAT TO WEAR

- **Wear a face mask of some kind that will cover your nose and mouth, such as a multi-layered cloth mask or bandana.** This will reduce your risk of contracting the COVID-19 virus through respiratory droplets from other individuals as well as reduce the risk of spreading it if you are infected with the COVID-19 virus but are unaware.

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Simple face masks have limited ability to protect against the effects of chemical agents however

- **Consider half or full-face respirators available at hardware stores** which can be helpful both in reducing the risk of contracting or spreading respiratory droplets as well as reducing the effects of chemical gas or spray exposure
- **N95 masks can be somewhat helpful as well**, but may not be as effective as respirators, and have the additional disadvantage of being a valuable and limited resource that health professionals need in order to treat patients during the COVID-19 pandemic
- **Full gas masks tend to be much more expensive** but can provide some of the best facial protection from chemical agent exposure, if properly fitted and sealed. If possible, ensure the gas mask is military-grade, as civilian-grade gas masks typically have glass eye pieces that can shatter if hit by a projectile
- **Facial coverage can also help protect your identity** from being used in facial recognition technology systems
- **Wear your medical alert bracelet or bring information** about any chronic medical conditions or allergies you may have in case you are rendered unconscious before medical personnel are able to reach you
- **Consider wearing shatter-resistant goggles or eye protection** that will protect your eyes and vision from flying projectiles such as rubber bullets. Eye protection that won't shatter on impact will prevent glass shards from being pushed into the eye by a projectile
- **Consider wearing a clear face shield that goes over your goggles and mask.** Clear face shields can further decrease the risk of respiratory droplets landing on your face or entering your eyes. It can also offer some measure of protection against small flying debris, dirt or dust particles that are kicked up
- **Consider wearing a helmet or hard hat covering** to protect your head and brain from potential trauma by projectiles, overhead bludgeoning by hard objects, trampling, or any falls that may occur if violence erupts
- **Consider wearing full-coverage, thick clothing that covers exposed skin** (e.g. denim) if possible. Covering as much of your skin as possible will help provide some protection from rubber bullets, projectiles, potential falls and scrapes. It also reduces the amount of skin exposed to chemical agents such as pepper spray or tear gas. Consider your local climate, the expected weather, temperature on the day of the protest, and tradeoffs that will likely need to be made. Thicker material may provide slightly more protection, but may be much hotter in the heat and increase your risk of heat stroke or exhaustion. Find the balance between risk and comfort that you are willing to take
- **Avoid wearing contacts or any eye makeup if possible.** Contacts can trap gas between the lenses and your eyes. Eye makeup including eyeliner, eye shadow, and facial lotions, are often oil-based and can trap the chemicals against your skin. They may also become irritants when mixed with chemicals, sweat, and other fluids

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- **Wearing glasses come with its own risks** unfortunately, including being shattered by a projectile or potentially losing the ability to see if your glasses are dropped, stepped on, or lost in a scuffle. Consider bringing a spare pair of glasses in a hard case if that is an option
- **If you do wear contacts lenses**, keep goggles or a full facial mask on whenever possible, but especially if chemical exposure is expected
- **Avoid using oils, lotions, or detergents to shower or wash beforehand**, as they can trap chemicals and prolong your exposure. Wash your clothes, hair and skin with detergent-free and unscented soap, if possible, prior to the event
- **Consider wearing earplugs** which can help protect your hearing against items such as flashbangs and diminish the impact of loud noises such as shots, screaming, or sirens
- **Consider wearing heat-resistant gloves** which may provide some protection against hot gas canisters which will be too hot handle with bare hands
 - If you wear nitrile or latex gloves, check the label for the material's temperature tolerance. Be extremely cautious in trying to pick up anything hot with these gloves as the rubber material may melt and adhere to the skin
- **Consider wearing comfortable, protective, and close-toed shoes with thick socks** for walking long-distances and potentially running. Blisters from improper footwear or lack of socks are a small health issue that can have a large impact. Consider bringing small bandages for potential blisters or cuts
- **Consider wearing a backpack or drawstring pack** that will make it easier to run if necessary, rather than an over-the-shoulder bag which might come loose and become lost
 - **Consider bringing two packs or bags, one of which you are willing to abandon if necessary.** Pack one bag with water, snacks, extra clothes, and/or other heavy and replaceable supplies that can be dropped in a serious emergency if you need to run. Pack a second smaller bag (e.g. fanny pack, hidden pouch under a shirt, drawstring bag under backpack, etc.) that carry your most important essentials
- **Apply a good layer of sunscreen on any exposed skin beforehand (preferably water or alcohol-based rather than oil-based)**, and bring extra if believe you will have time to reapply. Oil-based sunscreen is not ideal as the oil can trap chemicals against your skin, but it is better than no sunscreen if you anticipate prolonged UV ray and sun exposure. Sunburned skin that is exposed to pepper spray can be very painful, in addition to the increased risk of skin cancer in the long-term

WHAT TO BRING

- **Bring a bottle of hand sanitizer (with at least 60% alcohol content)** to use regularly during the protest event, especially after physical contact with other individuals and

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surfaces that may have high-touch rates (e.g. hand rails, door handles, public transport surfaces, etc.)

- **If you have a chronic medical condition** such as diabetes, asthma, or severe allergies, bring the medical items you need to stay safe. These might include glucose tablets, a rescue inhaler, an EpiPen, etc. If you carry controlled prescription medications without the bottle, consider what documentation you might need to bring if you don't carry your pills or medication in
- **Bring a large refillable water bottle that has a squirt or spout top, if possible.** Hydration during hot weather temperatures and crowds is an often overlooked precaution, but tends to disproportionality cause many of the health issues at protests and large crowds. Having a squirt or spout top can double as a second irrigation tool for rinsing eyes or skin exposed to chemical agents
- **Consider bringing an eyewash or squirt bottle filled with medical saline or potable water** specifically for flushing eyes in case of tear gas or pepper spray exposure. Saline vials of 20 to 50 milliliters are appropriate for tear gas. Larger eyewash bottles are appropriate for pepper spray. It is not advisable to use milk as an irrigation liquid. Carefully review any research or data on the effectiveness of other suggested irrigation liquids before deciding to use them on yourself and others
- **Consider bringing a change of clothes and a disposable bag for soiled clothes** in case of a medical emergency that results in blood or other bodily fluids being spilled. Chemical agents linger on clothes and will continue to reactivate and aggravate skin after the first exposure if you do not change out of contaminated clothes
- **Consider bringing a spare set of PPE (e.g. face mask, goggles, etc.) if possible** in case they are soiled by dirt, chemicals, saliva, or other fluids which may render them ineffective or less protective against respiratory droplets and chemical agents
- **Consider bringing a high-energy snack and cough drops.** A snack will help keep your energy up while you expend energy walking and can prevent a sudden drop in blood sugar levels. If you are detained, you may not have access to food for several hours. While you should avoid shouting, chanting, or screaming if possible as it increases the spread of respiratory droplets, cough drops can be used as symptom relief for sore throats and decrease any urge to cough, which also increases the risk of droplet spread
- **Consider bringing Sudecon Wipes or making your own decontamination wipes.** Sudecon Wipes and similar products are rapid chemical decontamination wipes that can be bought online and are used to lift contaminating agents from the skin after pepper spray exposure. They may help wipe away a significant amount of chemical agent and bring some measure of relief
- **Consider bringing clean tissues or baby wipes in a sealed bag** which can be useful for general wipe downs, spills, or as a measure of hygiene comfort after a long day
- **Consider bringing basic first aid and wound care supplies** such as gauze pads, bandages, and medical tape

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WHEN TO STAY HOME

- **If you are at all feeling ill or experiencing symptoms** (e.g. increased temperature, sweating, general feelings of malaise) participate in alternate ways such as writing to your legislators, volunteering virtually, contributing to your local community organization, etc.
- **If you have a severe chronic respiratory medical condition** such as asthma, emphysema, or other respiratory condition that makes it difficult to breathe, consider participating in alternate ways. Many reports of police violence against protestors have involved chemical agents, such as tear gas and pepper spray, that can potentially exacerbate respiratory conditions and have long-term health effects
- **If you are ill with another virus or infection**, such as the common cold or seasonal flu, consider participating in alternate ways. Being sick or immunocompromised can make you more susceptible to catching the COVID-19 virus and other infections
- **Consider the impact on vulnerable persons living in the same household** who you may expose if you contract the COVID-19 virus at an event (e.g. elderly parents or immunocompromised persons). Determine your acceptable level of risk and comfort
- **If you have had close contact with a person who has symptoms of the COVID-19 virus within the past 14 days** (e.g. coughing, fever, shortness of breath), stay home and monitor your own symptoms
- **If you have tested positive for the COVID-19 virus, even if you are not experiencing symptoms**, you can still transmit the virus to others. Stay home and monitor your symptoms

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PART II : DURING THE PROTEST EVENT

SAFE PRACTICES WHILE EXERCISING YOUR RIGHTS

- **Attempting to physically distance at least 6 feet from other individuals when possible** will decrease your risk of exposure to the COVID-19 virus while marching in large crowds, especially if others are not wearing face masks. This is understandably difficult during mass protest events, but every attempt to space out and avoid close interaction can decrease your risk
 - **This is especially important because not all individuals infected with the COVID-19 virus may feel sick or exhibit the common symptoms** (e.g. coughing or fever). They are still able to transmit the virus through respiratory droplets, however, and may attend the protest without realizing that they are infected. This is known as asymptomatic transmission
 - **Some individuals infected with the COVID-19 virus may still be in the pre-symptomatic stage and do not realize they are infected yet.** Because individuals may become infectious about 2 days *before* signs and symptoms show, they are able to transmit the virus through respiratory droplets without appearing ill
- **Wearing a face mask or some kind during the protest** can help protect your nose and mouth from virus-laden droplet splash and reduce the spread of droplets
- **Wearing a clear face shield and shatter-resistant goggles during the protest** can serve multiple functions in helping to protect your eyes and face from injury by flying projectiles, chemical agents, and virus-laden droplets
- **Consider using noise-makers and signs rather than chanting or shouting.** Chanting, shouting, singing, and even forceful talking can drastically increase the radius and probability of droplets being projected from the mouth, which can increase the risk of spreading the COVID-19 virus
- **Consider fast walking rather than running when feasible.** Running increases both the volume and rate of your inhalation and exhalation. This increases both the possibility of inhaling virus-laden droplets and spreading them to others
- **Outdoor protesting tends to be less risky than indoor protesting** as air and wind in an open environment can dilute virus particle density more quickly

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THINGS TO DO WHILE PROTESTING

- **Avoid touching your face or mask with your hands, including rubbing your eyes, nose, or mouth.** This can be difficult to remember, either because of ongoing circumstances or unconscious reflex
 - **Consider regularly and frequently applying alcohol-based hand sanitizer** while protesting in order to reduce the possibility that you will transport virus-laden droplets from your hands when you do accidentally touch your face
 - **If you need to touch your face for some reason,** consider washing your hands with soap and water first if possible. If not, sanitize your hands with alcohol sanitizer and use a clean tissue as a barrier against direct contact
- **Apply alcohol-based hand sanitizer (with at least 60% alcohol-content) especially after physical contact with other individuals and surfaces with high-touch rates** (e.g. hand rails, door handles, public transport surfaces, etc.)
 - **Keep in mind that alcohol-based hand sanitizers** can quickly reduce the number of microbes on hands, but do not physically wash away particulate matter. Hand washing with soap and water is the ideal method because it can both mechanically wash away microbes and disrupt the outer lipid layer of the COVID-19 virus to effectively kill it. Hand sanitizers tend not to be as effective when your hands are visibly dirty or greasy and may not remove harmful chemicals
 - **Proper protocol for effective use** is to apply the product to the palm of one hand (read the label for the correct amount), rubbing the product over all the surfaces of your hands, and allowing your hands to dry before proceeding to touch anything else
 - **Common mistakes that reduce effectiveness** include not using an adequate amount of hand sanitizer that effectively covers or coats the hands, and wiping away hand sanitizer before it has dried
- **Keep hydrated with a large refillable water bottle that has a squirt or spout top,** especially during hot weather and high temperatures. Hydration is a commonly overlooked precaution but tends to disproportionality cause many health issues at protests and large crowds
 - **Feeling thirsty, dizzy, lightheaded, or fatigued can be a warning sign** of heat stroke or imminent unconsciousness. Rest in a shady area if possible and rehydrate until you feel better. Passing out can be very dangerous while walking as you may hit your head or injure yourself when falling
- **Eating a high-energy snack during the protest** can help keep your energy up and prevent sudden drops in blood sugar levels. If you are detained, you may not have access to food for at least several hours or more. Sucking on cough drops can serve as a palliative measure of relief if your throat is sore from shouting, and can also decrease the urge to cough which could spread respiratory droplets

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WHAT TO DO IF EXPOSED TO CHEMICAL AGENTS

- If you are able to receive advance warning or observe an approaching chemical agent cloud, consider donning protective gear (such as a gas mask) and moving out of range or towards higher ground as soon as possible. Many chemical agents are heavy and will tend to collect in higher concentrations closer to the ground as they drift
- **Consider walking rather than running when possible.** Running may cause you to breathe rapidly and inhale more chemical agents into your lungs. Try to keep breathing slowly and evenly
- **Orient yourself and head in a direction that will remove you from the immediate chaos if possible.** This can help reduce the possibility that you will face oncoming violence while incapacitated by chemical agent exposure and unable to respond to situational factors
- **Stay calm and try to remember that the symptoms are temporary.** Consider educating yourself on these chemical agents and what to expect prior to attending an event, which can help to reduce the probability of panicking in the moment
- **Consider flagging or approaching a Street Medic if you are able to find one.** They can help assist you with decontamination and symptom management process
- **If you are unable to reach assistance, here are some measures you can take**
 - **Using a decontamination wipe to first wipe from your forehead down to your chin** can lift a large quantity of the chemical agent away. It can also help prevent chemicals from being washed down into your mouth or nose during a flush
 - **Starting from the inner corner to the outer corner of each eye, flush each eye separately with copious amounts of sterile saline or bottled water.** Using milk is not advised. The chemical agents may cause a temporary increase pain during the flush, but continuous flushing will physically push the chemicals out of the eye and ultimately relieve symptoms
 - **Blink as many times as you can, but avoid rubbing your eyes or face** which can make things worse. Avoid swallowing and instead try rinsing your mouth. Try to cough or spit into a clean tissue or elbow to avoid spreading respiratory droplets if possible
 - **A mixture of water and antacids (e.g. Maalox) applied to affected areas of skin** exposed to chemical agents can help decrease the burning sensation
 - Prepare to experience symptoms for up to 15 minutes
- **Consider changing into a clean set of clothes when possible** after chemical agent exposure. Chemical residue can linger on clothes and continue to cause irritation or reactivate when coming into contact with water
- **If you believe you have been exposed to droplets of the COVID-19 virus** during the protest, consider self-quarantining from others for the next 14 days following the event.

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PART III : AFTER THE PROTEST EVENT

WHAT TO DO FOLLOWING THE EVENT

Decontamination Protocols:

1. Immediately following the protest but before using transportation, consider finding a location where you can change into clean clothes and wash your hands with soap and water if possible
 - Wash every inch of your hands vigorously with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially if you have touched any public surfaces or been in physical contact with other individuals. Use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol content this is not feasible
2. Until you are able to wash your hands and change out of your soiled clothes, try to avoid touching or coming into contact with anything. This includes not touching your face or other people with your hands, and not sitting or leaning against surfaces when possible. This can help limit contaminating surfaces with chemical agents and reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus droplets
 - Place the contaminated clothes in a sealed bag until they can be washed and do not mix them with clean clothes. Some data suggest the COVID-19 virus may survive up to 2 days on fabrics. If you were exposed to any chemical agents, these can also be active for up to 5 days after initial release
 - Wash your hands with soap and water again after touching contaminated clothes if possible. Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer if this is not feasible
3. Once arriving at your residence, consider shedding any garments or items worn to the event and leave them *outside* the door or in an isolated location or entryway (e.g. garage, porch, backyard). Consider leaving your clothes, shoes, socks, carrying pack, supplies, etc. on a disposable tarp or floor covering before going inside to shower first
 - Personal items or valuables such as phones, IDs, etc. should be decontaminated first if they are brought inside. First remove any visible contamination or particulates if present. Follow the electronic manufacturer's instructions for cleaning and disinfection products. If no manufacturer guidance is available, consider using alcohol-based wipes or sprays containing at least 70% alcohol to disinfect touch screens

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4. **Once inside, continue to avoid touching or coming into contact with any persons, furniture, carpets, or other surfaces when possible**
 - Wash your hands vigorously with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, particularly if you were unable to do so following the event
5. **Collect any necessary items and take a shower with soap for at least 20 minutes to wash away any remaining chemicals if you were exposed and prevent them from lingering on your skin.** Chemical agents can dry on the skin and be re-activated by water. Keep your eyes closed and try not to breathe in chemical agent residue during the shower when possible. Wash your hair especially thoroughly. Be aware of water flow direction as water spray coming from the top can carry chemical residue into the eyes
6. **Return afterwards to decontaminate your shoes and supplies both top to bottom**
 - **Consider wearing disposable gloves when disinfecting your items and surfaces.** These gloves should be discarded after each cleaning. If reusable gloves must be used, these gloves should be dedicated for cleaning COVID-19 contaminated surfaces and should not be used for other purposes. Be careful not to re-contaminate your hands when removing the gloves. Consider disinfecting the gloves before removing them
 - **Most household disinfectants are likely sufficient for the COVID-19 virus.** Consider checking the [EPA's list](#) for household cleaning products that meet their criteria for safe and effective use on objects against the COVID-19 virus. If surfaces are visibly dirty or covered in particulate matter, they should be cleaned using a regular detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection
7. **If you were exposed to chemical agents, hang your exposed clothes and carrying packs in an open, ventilated area for at least 48 hours before washing them if possible**
 - **If not feasible, consider storing the clothes in a sealed bag** until they can be washed. If you use a laundromat or cannot wash these items immediately, consider wiping them down with disinfectant first and storing them separately until then
 - **Using regular laundry cycle with hot water and detergent followed by a thorough dry** should be sufficient, as the COVID-19 virus is unlikely to survive detergent or high heat. Try to avoid shaking the bag and keeping it close to the washer when transferring your clothes. This will help avoid spreading any viral particles or chemical agent residue
 - **Wash your hands with soap and water for 20 minutes** after all disinfecting has been finished and contaminated clothes have been put into the washer
8. **Consider rinsing your washing machine on its highest heat setting once all clothes have been laundered** in order to clear any chemical agent residue inside the machine

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Medical Attention and Trauma Treatment:

- **Mental health and trauma treatment are commonly overlooked, but no less important than that of physical trauma.** Once you are decontaminated and in a safe place, consider seeking out someone you trust to debrief about the event, and provide support and comfort. Just as it is important to seek medical attention for physical wounds, it is critical to seek treatment for any emotional or mental trauma experienced, whether it occurred during the protest or was triggered by recent events
 - **Consider seeking out a licensed mental health professional if that is an option**
 - **Consider talking with a trusted friend, partner, significant other, or family member about what occurred at the protest.** Sharing your thoughts about how recent events have made you feel, whether you witnessed any violence at the event(s), and talking through any uncomfortable emotions you may be experiencing can help to process these difficult issues rather than repress them
- **If you still continue to experience any vision or breathing issues 30 minutes after removing all chemical agent residue, are concerned about potential exacerbation of any underlying health issues, or are concerned about your exposure to either the COVID-19 virus or chemical agents, consider calling your local healthcare provider for medical attention**
- **If you fell and injured yourself, were hit by a rubber bullet, baton, vehicle, or other projectile, consider seeking medical attention to check on the injury.** While the injury or contusion may appear superficial, there may be deeper injuries not visible on the surface or internal bleeding that could be a serious risk to your health
- **If you were handcuffed or zip tied during a protest event, a common injury sustained is nerve compression in the hands due the tight restraints.** Clean any cuts, scrapes, or abrasions in the area with soap and water. Massage and stretch your arms and wrists in the following days. If you have any loss of feeling in your hands that continues in the following days, consider calling your local healthcare provider for medical attention as this may indicate more serious nerve damage

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WHAT TO DO OVER THE NEXT FEW DAYS AND WEEKS

1. Self-Quarantining and Isolation:

- Assume you have been exposed to the COVID-19 virus and take precautions to avoid unnecessarily exposing others after the event. Attending a mass gathering will place you in one of the highest categories of risk for exposure
 - From the time of your exposure to virus-laden droplets, there is a period of about 2 to 14 days during which the virus replicates inside the body before symptoms begin to show, called the incubation period. (The average period is about 5 days)
 - The end of this incubation period is marked by the beginning of the signs and symptoms of the COVID-19 virus (e.g. coughing, breath shortness, fever, etc.) that are commonly experienced. Not everyone will experience symptoms, however, even if they are infected with the COVID-19 virus. These are known as asymptomatic cases
 - You may become infectious about 2 days *before* these signs and symptoms begin to show, and be able to transmit the COVID-19 virus to other persons through virus-laden respiratory droplets. These activities may include chatting in close proximity with someone (especially if either of you are unmasked), touching shared surfaces with a hand that has touched your nose or mouth, and other similar transmission methods that spread respiratory droplets
- Self-quarantining for 2 weeks after attending protests if possible. Prepare the vulnerable persons sharing space with you or living in the same household (e.g. elderly or immunocompromised persons), and attempt to distance or quarantine from them in a separate part of the residence
 - Monitor your health and symptoms after the protest event and consider jotting down relevant occurrences on a calendar or journal. Important dates include the day of the event exposure, the day symptoms began, etc. Consider also taking and logging your temperature daily
 - Consider getting groceries, food, or other supplies delivered to your residence rather than going out if this is an option. Minimizing the amount of physical interaction and contact you have with other persons for the next 14 days following a mass event is very important for reducing community spread of the COVID-19 virus

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2. Getting Tested and Treated for the COVID-19 Virus:

- **Get tested around Days 4 to 5 of being exposed or attending a protest if possible.** The timing of getting tested is important because if you get tested too early following your exposure (e.g. the day of the protest, or the day after the protest), there is a risk that the virus levels in your body will not be high enough for the test to detect. *Thus, it is important to self-quarantine promptly after you are first exposed, and continue to do so while you wait to get tested*
 - **The type of diagnostic test you will likely receive is a Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) Test.** It is used to detect the unique genetic sequence of the virus and determine whether the virus is present in your body. This test is typically done by taking sample swabs from the back of the throat or nose. If the PCR test result returns positive, it means there were detectable virus levels in your throat or nose
 - **If you are infected with COVID-19 but get tested too soon,** there is a high probability of the PCR test returning a false-negative. The probability of a false-negative result on Day 1 of the exposure is 100%, but gradually decreases to a median of 67% on Day 4 (before symptom onset), and then to a median of 38% on Day 5 when many people will experience symptoms.¹ Thus around Day 4 and Day 5 after exposure are ideal timeframes to arrange getting tested
- **Call your doctor or your local COVID-19 hospital hotline immediately when you begin to experience symptoms (e.g. coughing, shortness of breath, fever, etc.).** They will be able to walk you through the process of when and where to get tested, or what resources to be in touch with. It will also be helpful for public health contact tracing to try and recall who you were in close contact with on those 2 days prior to symptoms appearing
 - **If you are unable to get tested until after Day 9 or later of being exposed** (and assuming you have been experiencing symptoms for several days), your health provider may indicate that you need a **Serology Test** instead, which typically takes a blood or saliva sample to test for the presence of IgG antibodies that your body produces in response to the virus
 - **A Serology Test is useful mostly in the later stages of the infection timeline** because your body takes about 10 to 14 days after being infected to produce these IgG antibodies in detectable quantities. A positive antibody test result indicates you have, at some point, been infected by the COVID-19 virus. It implies that either your immune system is currently producing antibodies to fight off the active infection, or that your immune system previously cleared the virus. Thus, a seropositive result can (but not necessarily) mean you are currently infectious and able to transmit the virus

¹ <https://www.acpjournals.org/doi/10.7326/M20-1495>

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- Being unable to afford or register for health insurance should not prevent you from seeking health care, especially if you believe you might have the COVID-19 virus or have a medical emergency. Consider contacting your state's health insurance program and looking into whether you qualify for Medicaid
 - If you are underinsured or are concerned about affording your deductible, many major health insurance companies (e.g. Aetna CVS, Anthem, Blue Cross Blue Shield, Cigna, Humana, United Healthcare, etc.) are waiving deductibles, copays, and coinsurances for the COVID-19 virus related hospitalization charges. Be aware, however, that this may not apply if your employer provides your health insurance and opts out and you could still have out-of-pocket costs

3. Public Health Advocacy Next Steps:

- Systemic Racism is an ongoing public health crisis, no less significant than the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. In many ways, it is far more insidious, deeper rooted, and less easily defeated than a virus
- Consider continuing your active advocacy through alternate means while you wait out self-quarantine. This could include contacting your local community organizations to virtually volunteer or assist with their efforts, writing to your local public officials, legislators, and other policymakers about your support on this issue, contributing to local organizations doing this kind of work, etc.

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FURTHER RESOURCES

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). *Guidelines on Considerations for Events and Gatherings*. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/considerations-for-events-gatherings.html>

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