

COVID-19 Q&A with a Medical Doctor

We sat down with a local medical doctor to ask our most pressing questions, this is the conversation.

Overview:

Dr: As a doctor I'm constantly getting emails from the Denton County Medical Society, the Texas State Medical Board, and all the different societies I belong to that are keeping me in the loop. Doctors are being very good at communicating with each other and getting resources where they need them.

And then as a doctor's wife, I'm seeing a unique perspective. My husband has been working twelve to fourteen-hour days for the last two weeks and then he is coming home to have zoom meetings and phone calls and what not. He's just in the thick of it all the time.

To give perspective of the whole thing, we've got this duality going on. **Ninety-nine percent of us will not get this. At this time, we are fine, and we will go on being fine. But if one percent of people in the Denton County area test positive, that will put our hospitals at the breaking point.** If two percent of Denton get sick, test positive, our hospitals are overwhelmed. There are not enough ventilators to go around for how many people we think will need a ventilator. However, ninety-eight percent of people will be fine. **We are probably going to be in the ninety-eighth percentile but, we are trying to help that two percent.** It's ironic because Christians tend to run to the trouble because they want to help. The first hospitals were founded by Christians. It's ironic that now our way of running to the trouble and helping is to stay away from people.

For those of you who like numbers, in the greater Denton area, not just in the city but like Corinth and surrounding cities near the Denton borders, we have about three hundred thousand people. In Denton County, we have eight hundred thousand people. We have had thirty people test positive. So, you are not going to get it today. There are thirty people out of three hundred thousand people who have tested positive. You are not going to get it most likely. **So, for your own level of personal anxiety, you can just breathe easy because it is unlikely you are going to get it. But we need to keep the total number of people in Denton being positive at one time to less than one percent.** And that is based on this, currently of the people who test positive, twenty percent of positive test end up in the hospital. **Five percent of people who test positive, will end up on the ventilator. Of those people, half will get better and half will die. And so, we are talking about seven tenths of a percent, it is less than one percent. We are just trying to keep up with that number.** To give you some comparison, New York City is just overwhelmed. Their hospitals are busting at the seams. Right now, they have 0.02 percent of their population test positive for the disease.

We just don't usually need the hospital. Usually one per one thousand people need to go to the hospital. With this virus, many people end up on a ventilator, they usually need to be on it for one to two weeks. In Denton County, we probably have about one hundred ventilators. Each ventilator is about one hundred eighty-thousand dollars. Hospitals can buy some more maybe. Currently not many companies are making them but, now GM has started making them. So, it's a logistics thing. **When you hear about people flattening the curve, we just need the total number in Denton testing positive with the disease to stay under one percent. Social distancing and quarantining, even though it is boring, is your weapon to fight this disease. We need to prevent us all getting sick at them same time.**

Questions:

Question 1: When I go outside, if there was a Covid 19 positive person who sneezed in the area and then I breathe the air in that area, could I get it?

Answer: You will not get it from the air when no one is around. You could get it from shaking hands, theoretically the virus could live on a hard surface. These are things you could do. When you must go out and go shopping for instance, be cautious and wipe down your cart. The stuff you buy is not considered a hard surface. Even if someone's wet sneeze touches your hand, you still must touch your face to possibly get sick.

Before you get to the store get out your debit card to limit what your hands are touching in your bag. When you leave, use hand sanitizer and assume that your hands are not clean. A mask can be a reminder for you not to touch your face. But don't take your mask off from the front, grab it by the back to pull it off. Wash your hands, use your hand sanitizer, don't touch too many things, and don't touch your face.

Question 2: Hand Sanitizer versus soap, which is better?

Answer: Both are good. Soap breaks up dirt and kills bacteria. The water does not have to be hot in order to be effective. Sanitizer with 70% percent alcohol will break down and kill bacteria for sure.

Question 3: Can the virus survive in areas with higher temperatures?

Answer: It can survive. The idea that it will die in temperatures that are 82 degrees or hotter is false.

Question 4: What can I do to not catch the disease? I have asthma.

Answer: Social distancing is the best thing you can do. Also, if you must get out, just assume that your hands are dirty, don't touch your face, and clean your hands once you get home. Clean hard surfaces in your home with ¼ cup of bleach to 1 gallon of water. Keep up with your current asthma medication.

Question 5: Worst case scenario is that 2 million Americans will die. When will the wave come in America?

Answer: It will be different for every location. Dallas County predicts that by April 28th Dallas will be overwhelmed. In Denton 5 people at the Denton State School have tested positive.

Question 6: Once you have had the virus can you catch it again?

Answer: With a healthy immune system you most likely would not catch it again or if you did your body will fight it quickly.

Question 7: Where do you suggest I get information on the virus?

Answer: I would stick to major news outlets, CDC.