



Surviving Cancer During Covid-19 Pandemic.

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Background



- Originated in Wuhan ,China in December 2019 ,thought to have started in a meat market.
- On 30 January 2020, the WHO declared it an Public Health Emergency of International Concern
- 11 March 2020,WHO declared it a pandemic
- To date more than 9.5M infections worldwide,
 - 124 590 cases in SA
 - 2340 deaths
 - 6579 new cases over 24 hours.



SARS Co V2 spread

- Droplet spread
 - Coughing
 - Sneezing
 - Shouting/Singing
 - Flushing toilet with an open lid
- Handshake
- Touching infected surfaces. Eg wood,paper etc




SYMPTOMS



- Fever
- Sore throat
- Coughing
- Diarrhea
- Loss of smell
- Flu like symptoms
- Nausea /Vomiting



PREVENTION

- ▶ Handwashing
 - ▶ Soap
 - ▶ Sanitizer when there is no immediate access to water
 - ▶ Face masks- worn properly.
 - ▶ Covered nose and mouth.
 - ▶ Face shields
 - ▶ Avoid touching face
 - ▶ Social distancing at least 1.5 meters.
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VULNERABLE PEOPLE

- ▶ Elderly >60
- ▶ Comorbidities:
 - ▶ Diabetes
 - ▶ HIV
 - ▶ Transplant/Immunosuppressive drugs
 - ▶ Hypertension
 - ▶ **CANCER(past and present)**
- ▶ Pregnancy
- ▶ Obesity
- ▶ Chronic Renal Failure requiring dialysis
- ▶ Asthma



COVID 19 AND CANCER

- ▶ Cancer patients are more likely to get infected with SARS CoV 2
- ▶ Higher likelihood
 - ▶ Death,
 - ▶ ICU admision
 - ▶ Intubation./severe infections.

What You Can do if You are at Higher Risk of Severe Illness from COVID-19

(Print Resources Web Page: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/print-resources.html>)

Are You at Higher Risk for Severe Illness?



Based on what we know now, those at high-risk for severe illness from COVID-19 are:

- People aged 65 years and older
- People who live in a nursing home or long-term care facility

People of all ages with underlying medical conditions, particularly if not well controlled, including:

- People with chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma
- People who have serious heart conditions
- People who are immunocompromised
 - Many conditions can cause a person to be immunocompromised, including cancer treatment, smoking, bone marrow or organ transplantation, immune deficiencies, poorly controlled HIV or AIDS, and prolonged use of corticosteroids and other immune weakening medications.
- People with severe obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 40 or higher)
- People with diabetes
- People with chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis
- People with liver disease

Here's What You Can do to Help Protect Yourself



Stay home if possible.



Wash your hands often.



Avoid close contact (6 feet, which is about two arm lengths) with people who are sick.



Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.



Avoid all cruise travel and non-essential air travel.

Call your healthcare professional if you are sick.

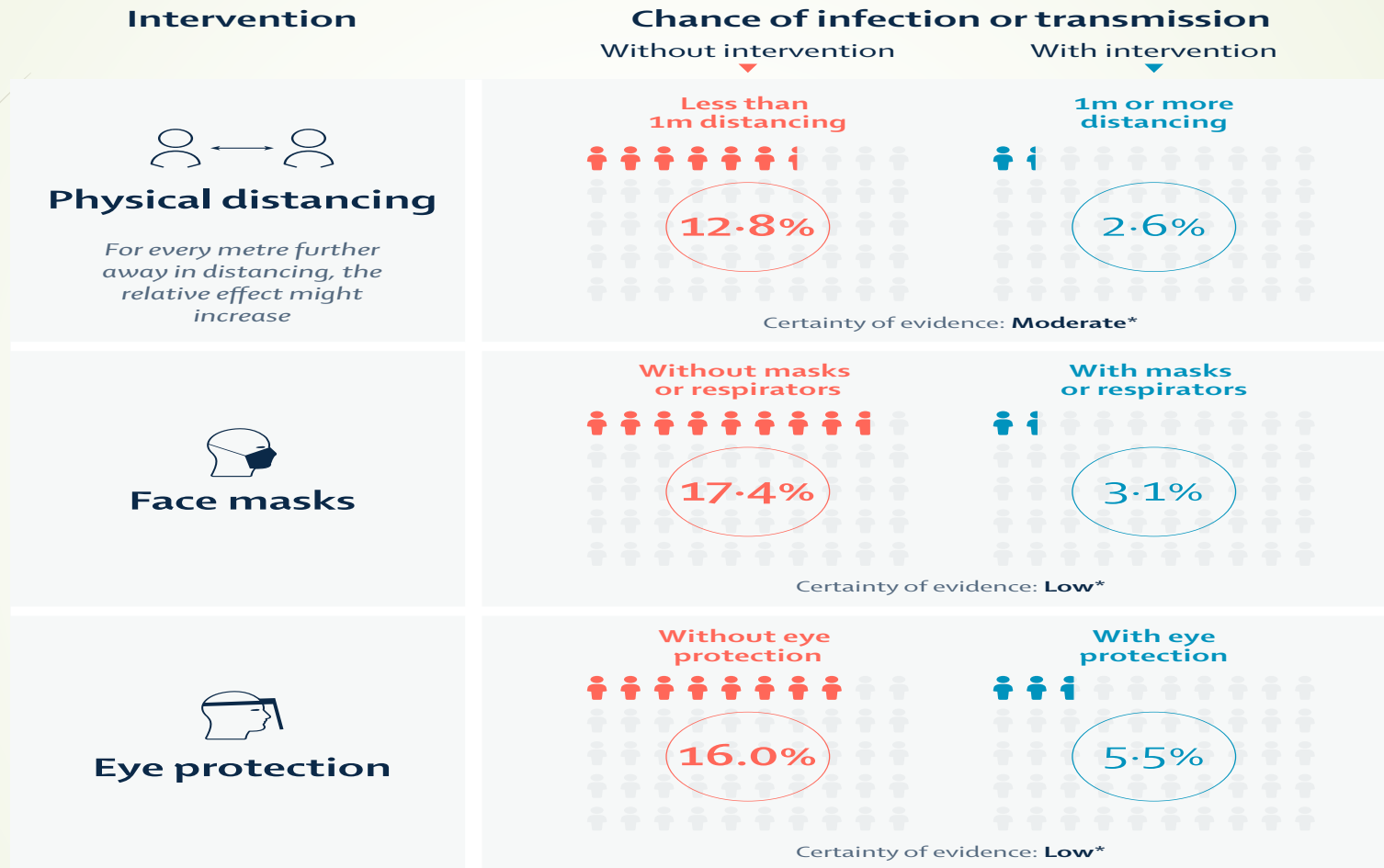
For more information on steps you can take to protect yourself, see CDC's [How to Protect Yourself](#).



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[cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)

What protects against COVID-19 infection or transmission?



* See the paper below for full explanations of certainty and why these categories are used. Moderate certainty: we are moderately confident in the effect estimate; the true effect is probably close to the estimate, but it is possibly substantially different. Low certainty: our confidence in the effect estimate is limited; the true effect could be substantially different from the estimate of the effect.

Even when properly used and combined, none of these interventions offers complete protection and other basic protective measures (such as hand hygiene) are essential to reduce transmission

Chu DK, Akl EA, Duda S, et al.
Physical distancing, face masks, and eye protection to prevent person-to-person transmission of SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Lancet* 2020. Published online June 1.

THE LANCET

What can you do?

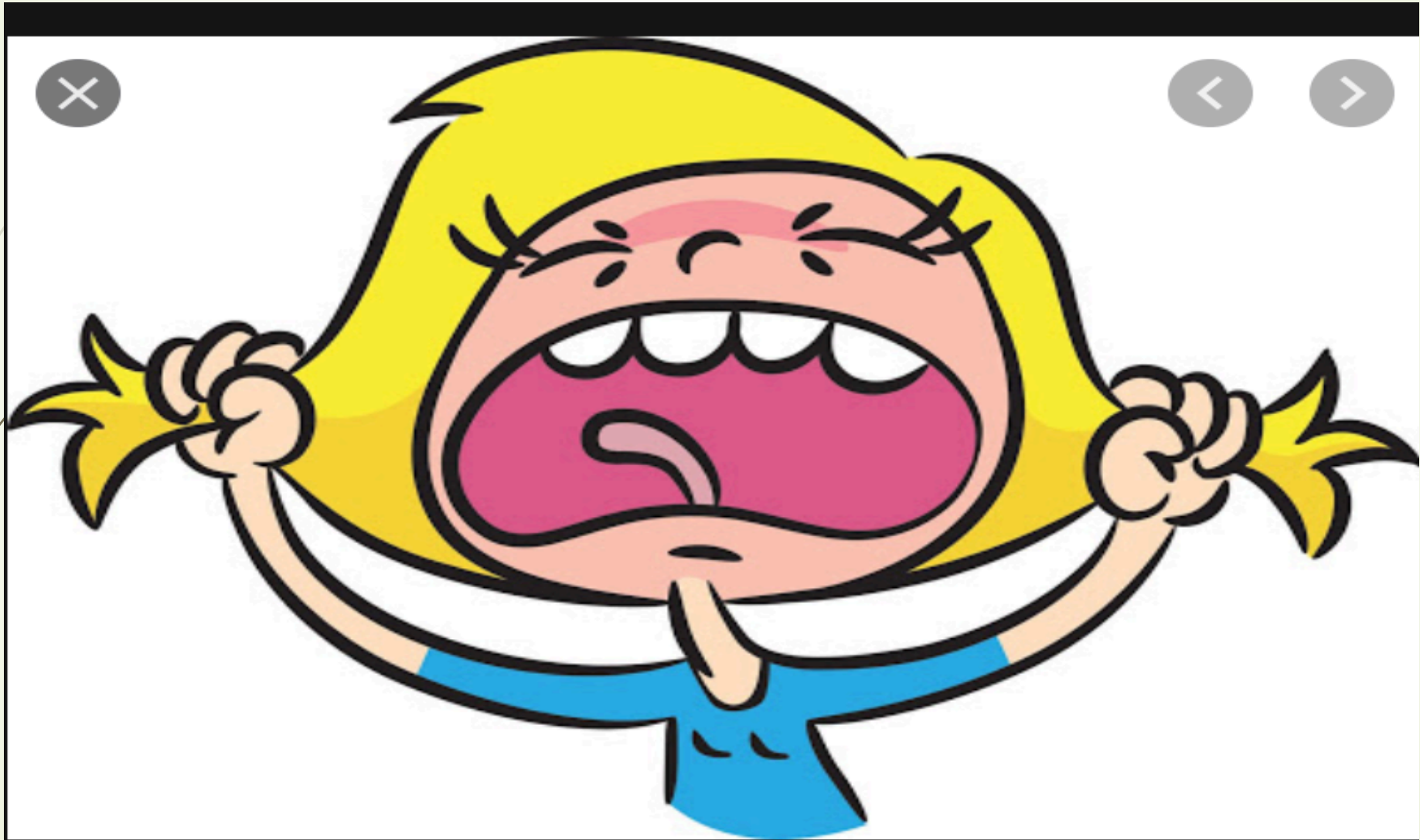




What else can you do?

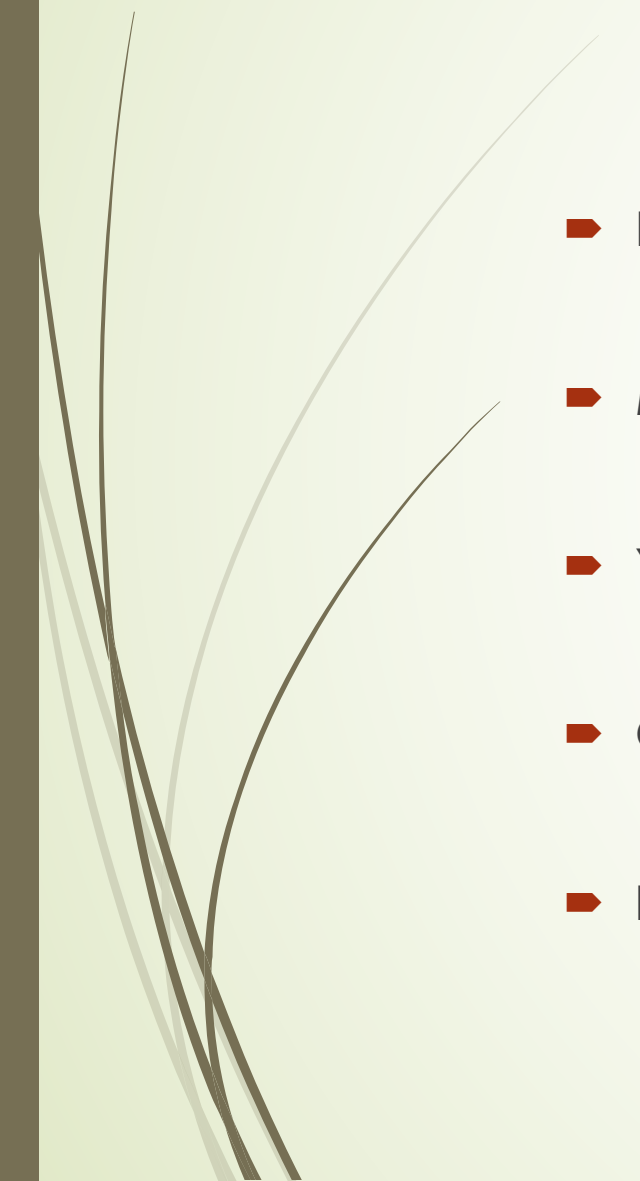
- ▶ Sleep!
- ▶ Good nutrition: high in cruciferous vegetables and fruit, no processed food, whole grains and protein (lentils, beans, fish, chicken)
- ▶ Exercise; 30 minutes of walking daily if on chemotherapy
 - ▶ Otherwise aim for 150 minutes of moderate exercise/week
- ▶ Vitamins/Supplements to be discussed with your Oncologist if you are on treatment.
 - ▶ Zinc
 - ▶ Vit C (not more than 1000mg if on chemotherapy)
 - ▶ Vit D?
- ▶ Avoid unnecessary trips/excursions.
 - ▶ Consider online shopping
 - ▶ Home delivery of medications. (Pharmacy likely to be full of sick people!)
 - ▶ Work from home
- ▶ Stop Smoking/Vaping.

REDUCE STRESS





Stress management

- Exercise!
 - Meditation
 - Yoga
 - Quiet time
 - If required online therapy.
- 



What about your treatment?

- ▶ Discuss with your Oncologist :
 - ▶ Treatment holiday?(depending on treatment intent- curative vs palliative)
 - ▶ Change to a less frequent schedule(provided it is effective)
 - ▶ Oral chemotherapy(if available and appropriate)
 - ▶ Balancing of risks
- ▶ Telemedicine.
- ▶ Postponement of “non-essential “ appointments-
- ▶ Omission of treatments with borderline benefit.
- ▶ Hormonal blockade has not been shown to be associated with worse outcomes.



What if you have Covid Symptoms?

- ▶ **DO NOT GO TO THE ONCOLOGY UNIT!**
- ▶ **Call your Dr**
 - ▶ (GP- if not on active treatment, or in Endocrine therapy.
 - ▶ or Oncologist- if on active therapy.
- ▶ **Drive through testing stations or ER**
- ▶ **Admission to be considered for serious symptoms like shortness of breath**
- ▶ **Isolate at home for 14 days from date of diagnosis- conservative management.**



RESOURCES



- ▶ [Cancer.Net: Coronavirus and COVID-19: What People With Cancer Need to Know, with Dr. Merry Jennifer Markham](#)
- ▶ [<https://www.cancer.net/blog/2020-06/common-questions-about-covid-19-and-cancer-answers-patients-and-survivors>](#)
- ▶ [<https://www.cancer.gov/coronavirus>](#)

