

Coronavirus: What You Should Really Do Regarding Your Stockpile

As the COVID-19 Coronavirus sweeps the globe, different people are reacting in different ways.

For most, fear is a part of that reaction. That's normal, as we all tend to be afraid of the unknown and there's still a lot of unknown about this virus. But the truly scary part isn't the fear that people are having; it's the fear that governments are having.

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Don't get me wrong; I don't envy the problems that the president and state governors are facing right now. They are in a no-win situation, where they are having to make decisions based on limited information, with the foreknowledge that there is no right answer. No matter what they decide, there will be others, sitting on the sidelines, telling them how wrong they are.

As it stands right now, if the president or some governor calls for a full quarantine, they will be blasted for overreacting and destroying the economy. If they don't call for that, they will be blasted for not taking the situation seriously and every death will be laid at their doorstep. Both of these reactions are already happening, it just depends on

who is doing the complaining about what the government is doing, and that doesn't necessarily follow party lines.

Is Quarantine Coming?

The entire state of California, 40 million people, is now under quarantine. New York Governor, Andrew Cuomo is directing non-essential businesses to keep their workers at home. Even in Texas, which has relatively few cases, the governor is calling for voluntary self-isolation for the next two weeks.

Is this an overreaction? Or is it necessary to prevent a massive number of people from dying?

To answer that question, we need to understand why the government is calling for people to self-quarantine, specifically why they're calling for a 14-day self-quarantine.

Self-quarantine tips if you're sick with COVID-19

DO



Stay home, avoid public areas and mass transit.



Isolate yourself from others in your home.



Use a separate bathroom, if possible.



Call ahead before visiting the doctor.



Wash your hands often.



Wear a face mask around other people and pets.



Cover coughs and sneezes.

DON'T



Go outside for any reason.



Let in any non-essential visitors.



Have contact with pets and other animals, if possible.



Share space with housemates, if possible.



Share dishes, utensils, cups, towels or bedding.



Go to the doctor without calling ahead.



Discontinue home isolation until instructed.

Source: CDC

There's no way that a 14-day quarantine is going to put a total stop to the disease. First of all, there are a significant number of cases on record, where the incubation period was longer than 14 days. Secondly, even if all incubation periods fell within the 14-day window, people are still contagious while their bodies are battling the disease. If they are treated at home, there's still a chance of them infecting their families.

So what's the 14-day voluntary quarantine about then?

Just like social distancing, the 14-day voluntary self-isolation is about slowing the spread of the disease, rather than stopping it. It is being instituted now, to ensure that everyone who comes down with a serious case of the disease will have a hospital bed to rest in and a respirator to help them breathe. It's to ensure that our medical community is able to give people the treatment they need, in order to give them the greatest chances of defeating the virus and surviving.

I recently saw some rather interesting computer models, which showed how a viral disease of this type propagates through a population. In a "normal" situation, where there are no safeguards in place, the number of cases of the disease rises rapidly, outpacing the medical community's ability to deal with it. A full quarantine of those who are infected is hard to institute because you will always have some people who are going to be "leakers" slipping through and spreading the disease. The most effective thing to do is to isolate as many people as possible, reducing the number of people who are moving around and spreading the disease throughout the population.

This is what the government is trying to do. By asking people to shelter in their homes, they are hoping to drastically reduce the number of people who are out and about, with the potential of spreading the disease. We are not being told that we can't leave our homes at all, but rather being asked to avoid leaving them as much as possible. At the same time, places where people congregate, where one contagious person could easily infect many other people, are being closed for

two weeks, with the same goal of slowing the spread of the disease.

I remember reading a few years back about how school desks have more germs on them than the average toilet seat. My reaction at that time was to write a satire about it. But if you think about it, our schools are a breeding ground for disease. They are filled with children, most of whom are not all that concerned about personal hygiene and who all come into close contact with each other. Typically, if one child gets sick, you can count on the whole class catching it within a week or two.

So, what will this quarantine do for us?

Basically, it does two things. The first is that it shows the spread of the disease, spreading it out over a longer period of time. This will level out the workload for our medical professionals so that they can give each patient the treatment that they need. At the same time, the extra time before hitting the peak number of sick people will give medical researchers more time to come up with a cure and test it properly.

I've seen quite a few articles over the last few weeks, which have talked about how this doctor or that laboratory has come up with a potential cure for COVID-19. That's great. But I'm concerned that the people writing those articles might be giving people false hope. It's not that I don't believe that those potential cures are real, but rather that there's a huge difference between developing a potential cure and being able to make it available for use.

Our FDA puts very heavy requirements on

pharmaceutical companies and researchers who develop new drugs; probably the heaviest such requirements in the world. Before a new drug can hit the market, it has to pass through an extensive series of tests, including clinical trials where it is used on a varied population of patients, to see if the drug actually does what it is expected to do, under all circumstances. If it won't, but it still will in some cases, that has to be determined and documented as well. Finally, the potential side effects have to be understood, as well as possible, before the FDA will approve the drug.

In the last few days, President Trump has ordered the FDA to fast-track testing and approval of one experimental treatment, using a drug that is normally used for treating malaria as a treatment for COVID-19. This probably has the best chance of approval from a regulatory perspective, simply because it is a known drug with a history. Because of that, they don't have to establish parameters of safety and potential side-effects of the drug. That information is already known.

What About Stockpiling?

If you've been in the grocery store anytime within the last two weeks, you've seen how decimated the inventory is. Those stores only carry a three-day supply of packaged foods (canned, boxed and

bagged) and a one day supply of perishable foods (produce, meat, milk & bread). We who are in the prepping movement have known this for a long time and have expected the shelves to empty as they have.

Even so, the types of things that have been flying off the shelves have been somewhat surprising. I think 2020 will long be known as the year of the toilet paper shortage. A number of renowned sociologists have made statements about this phenomenon, mostly saying that it has been a case of people buying it because others are buying it. I call it, "the herd mentality," following the cow ahead of you, wherever they go.

The good news is that there is no food shortage. The pipeline is full. There's enough grain in the country to bake something like 14,000 loaves of bread for every man, woman, and child in America. The only problem is getting the food from where it is, to the shelves of our local grocery stores. Give it a week or two, and things will sort themselves out.

With that being the case, why are people stockpiling? Is it just panic, or is there a good reason for it?



To answer that, we have to realize that this is not the sort of disaster that you and I have prepared for. Mostly, we prepare for natural disasters and TEOTWAWKI events, like an EMP. In the case of

the latter, our stockpiles are our lifeline for survival. That's what is going to allow us to keep going on in those situations and those who don't have a stockpile of food are probably not going to make it.

That's not what's going on here. Nobody is going to die from lack of food. If anything, most of us could use a couple of weeks of forced starvation, so that we could get rid of a few extra pounds. But that's not going to happen either. Rather, the panic buying that people are doing now, is going to work out to be an important part of the government's call for self-isolation. By having all that food in their homes, those people aren't going to have to go out in public, into the grocery stores, and thereby help in spreading the disease.

You and I can live off our stockpiles, waiting for the current crisis to end and then restock what we've used. With that in mind, I'd recommend keeping track of everything you take from your stockpile in the next couple of weeks, so that you'll know what you need to buy later and not have to take an inventory to find out what you've used.

What About Water?

Water is one of the things that people are stocking upon. Apparently they are afraid that our municipal water service is going to stop for some reason. That question occurred to me as well, and I've looked into it.

The first thing I found was that our water treatment plants,

both freshwater and wastewater, are not automated. I had expected that they would be, with only a minimal staff to keep an eye on things. But it turns out that it is not easy to automate water treatment, because the water they are treating is not consistent. The water needs to be tested constantly, decisions made and amounts of chemicals altered to match the conditions at that time.

One simple example of this is the effect rainfall has on groundwater. When it rains, runoff adds silt and other debris to our lakes and streams. Water taken from those lakes and streams needs to have that silt removed as part of the treatment process. Chemicals are used to get it to clump together, allowing it to settle and be removed.

SURVIVAL WATER

- KNOW WHAT TYPES OF WATER CONTAINERS YOU NEED
- HOW TO PURIFY YOUR WATER
- HOW TO DISINFECT YOUR WATER
- THE DO'S AND DON'TS WHEN IT COMES TO ISSUES WATER RELATED



The good news I found out is that most water treatment plants can operate on a skeleton crew of two to four people for at least a few days. This means that something like $\frac{3}{4}$ of the people working in the plant can catch the virus and the plant can still operate.

So the chances of our water supplies becoming compromised and unusable are minimal.

Workers in these facilities are required to be certified. That certification consists of theoretical knowledge, training and time working in the job. Typically, the people in the management of those facilities come up from the ranks; meaning that they have the training, experience, and certifications too. So there is a “reserve force” of people available to pick up the slack if too many of the workers become ill with the pandemic.

The Bigger Concern

While Coronavirus is a great concern, it is not the biggest concern facing us at this time. The government at all levels seems to be doing a good job of figuring out what to do in this crisis and taking the appropriate steps. But in the process, we’re creating a long-term problem; specifically, what is this going to do to the economy?

Under Trump’s leadership, our nation’s economy has seen unprecedented growth throughout the last three years. But that’s at least temporarily come to an end. The Stock Market has been bouncing up and down (mostly down) and there are millions of people who are temporarily laid off, as we try to make it through the next few weeks with minimal spread of the disease. Unemployment is skyrocketing, even if that is only temporary unemployment.

This will be the challenge we will have to face; how to rebuild our nation, once we make it through this time. Nobody has the answer to that one right now. It’s likely the stock market will rebound; but what’s going to happen to small businesses? How many of those will go

under? What will those people and their employees do?

The President and Congress are working hard on answering those questions, even with their different points of view. I just hope they come up with the right answer, as we sit on the edge of the cliff right now, wondering if we're looking over the edge at a worldwide depression, caused by the Coronavirus.



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