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# ***SCD in the Era of Corona Virus (COVID-19): What you need to Know!***

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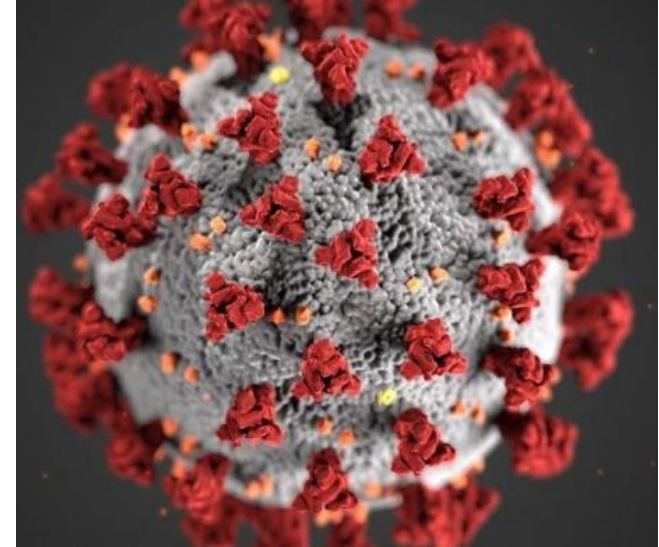
*Professor of Medicine Atrium Health, Charlotte, North Carolina, USA*

***SCD Patient Education Session March 17, 2020***

# Learning Objectives

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- What is COVID-19
- How is COVID-19 spread
- How can I tell if I have COVID-19
- *How will COVID-19 impact SCD*
- What can I do to protect myself
- What if I get sick? Have a pain crisis?
- Where can I go to get more information
- Q & A



# What is Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

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- **Coronaviruses** are a family of viruses that cause breathing / respiratory illness ranging from common cold to more severe disease
  - Middle Eastern Respiratory Syndrome (MERS)
  - Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)
- **COVID-19** is a **new mutation** of the coronavirus that was first identified in 2019. It is a **BRAND-NEW** virus to humans
- **COVID-19** can lead to no symptoms, mild upper respiratory symptoms or it can be severe enough to cause respiratory failure and death
- **COVID-19 is VERY Contagious** and can spread rapidly among contacts

# How is COVID-19 Spread?

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- COVID-19 is spread from person to person who are in close contact
  - Within **6 feet** of each other
  - By respiratory droplets (from sneezing, coughing, spitting) that land in your mouth, nose or that you breath into your lungs
  - **Touching contaminated surfaces** / objects then transferring to your eyes, mouth or nose
- In the U.S. COVID-19 cases include:
  - Imported cases from people who traveled to other countries
  - A close contacts of someone who is known to have COVID-19
  - Community-acquired cases where the source of the infection is *unknown*
  - As of **3/17/2020 10 pm** there were **6010 cases of COVID-19** in the US in ALL

# Who is at Highest Risk for COVID-19 Infection

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- Older Adults (65y and older)
- Patients with Heart Disease
- Patients with Diabetes
- Patients with Lung Disease
- Patients with pre-existing compromised immune system
  - Active cancer treatment
  - **Sickle cell disease**
  - Autoimmune disease on immune suppressants
  - Post transplant patients
  - Patients with Kidney Disease
- *Younger and healthier persons have also gotten sick from COVID-19\*\**

# How Can I Tell If I Have COVID-19?

- Symptoms of COVID-19 appear **2 -14 days** after you are exposed

- **Cough**
- **Fever over 100.4F**
- **Shortness of Breath**
- Others:
  - runny nose, fatigue, diarrhea



- Seek Urgent Medical Attention if you have these severe symptoms
  - Difficulty breathing
  - Persistent pain or pressure in chest
  - Confusion or inability to arouse
  - Blue color to lips

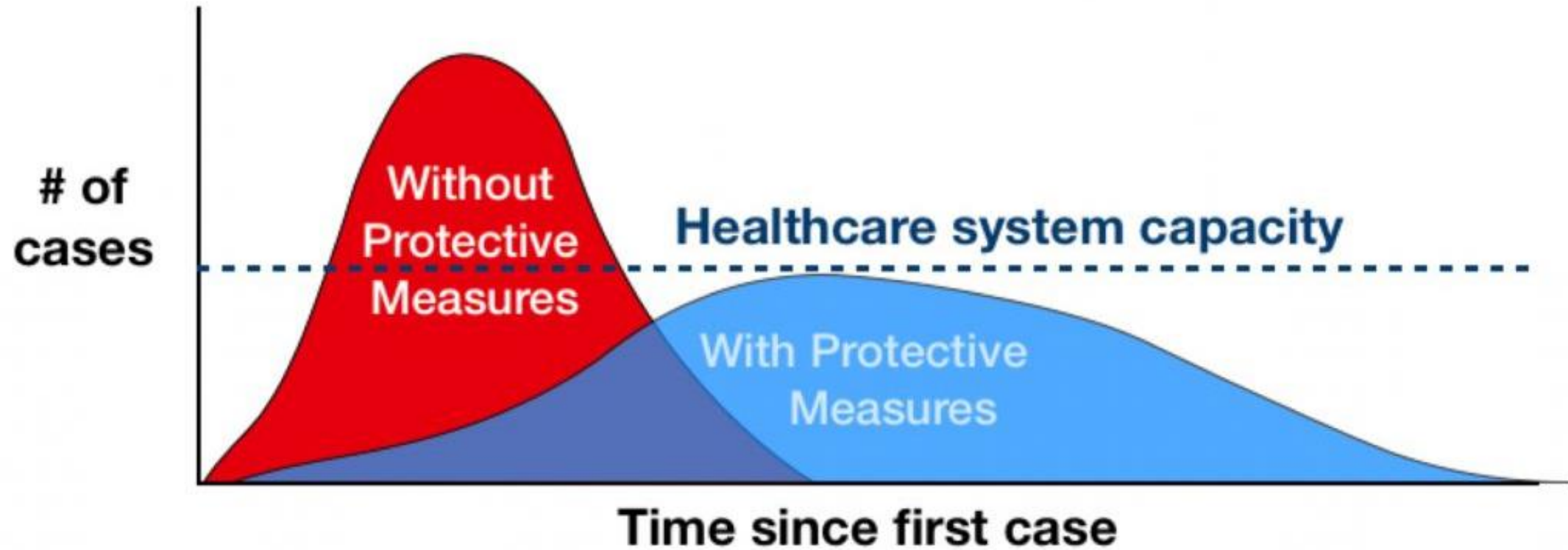
# How Could COVID-19 Impact SCD

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- Many symptoms of COVID-19 are like SCD complications
- We know that SCD persons have weakened immune systems
  - Concern for high complication rate of COVID-19 with SCD
  - Concern for high risk of catching infection when you go to ED/Hospital
  - Concern for reduced bed capacity in hospitals
  - Concern for blood supply shortage
- Even Flu and other common viruses can cause severe problems with SCD
  - Experience with H1N1 Flu showed ↑↑↑ risk for Pain crisis, Acute Chest Syndrome, Need for ICU and Life Support
  - ***The sicker you are the higher the risk*** – those with previous Acute Chest Syndrome or who are **NOT** on any disease modifying therapy are at **HIGHER** Risk
  - *Chronic transfusion therapy and Hydroxyurea were protective against Acute Chest Syndrome during H1N1*

***Due to the widespread serious nature of this virus, blood supply may become in short supply. This is a big deal for persons with SCD!***

# Why We Need to FLATTEN the CURVE



*Adapted from CDC / The Economist*

The Goal is to SLOW DOWN the spread of the disease so that healthcare capacity is NOT overwhelmed



# How Can I Keep Myself Healthy?

## CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)



### Coronavirus: Updates and Tips for Staying Healthy

You probably heard that the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is now in North Carolina and South Carolina. The news might make you nervous, but there are easy precautions you can take to stay healthy. And they're the same things you do to avoid any other virus, like the flu:

- Wash your hands with soap and water.
- Don't touch your face.
- Avoid close contact with someone who's sick.

Your doctors and all the teammates at Atrium Health are working diligently to keep you and the rest of the community informed and safe. If you or someone you know needs care, we are here!

## STOP THE SPREAD OF GERMS

Help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases like COVID-19.

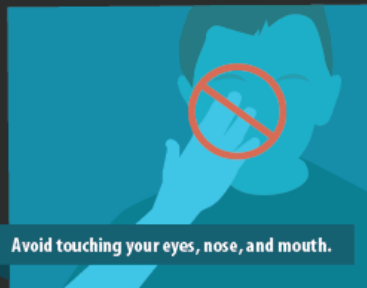
Avoid close contact with people who are sick.



Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.



Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.



Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.



Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.



Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.



[cdc.gov/COVID19](https://www.cdc.gov/COVID19)

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# Atrium Health Strategy for SCD in COVID-19 times

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- **Limit exposure to ER / Hospital**
  - Reduce risk of infection from other sick people
  - We will try hard to group appointments to same day whenever possible
  - We are offering “Phone” clinic appointments for specific patients
  - We are delaying clinic appointment for 2 months for low risk patients
    - **We will send in medications refills including pain meds**
  - Use **My.AtriumHealth.org** portal to message your SCD team with your needs and concerns
- **Education about COVID-19**
  - Social Distancing
    - **YES that includes Church, Mall, Movies**
  - Screen your visitors so they don't make you sick
  - Hand washing (20-30 seconds)
  - **Continue Your SCD Management Medications**
    - **Hydroxyurea**
    - **Endari**
    - **Crizanlizumab or Oxbryta**
    - **Chronic transfusions**

# Atrium Health Strategy for SCD in COVID-19 Times

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- **Avoid going to ED/ Hospital /Clinic**
  - Notify SCD team by phone or through **My.AtriumHealth.org with any concerns**
  - **We will work with you to try oral fluids and higher dose of ORAL pain medication to treat your pain**
  - **Monitor your Temperature**
  - We can manage many of your concerns by phone
    - E.g. refill pain meds, inhaler, call in antibiotics, etc.
  - We will use creative ways to help get you better without bringing you into the clinic or hospital setting
- **If you need to go to ED/ Hospital**
  - Notify SCD team or call “*Live Answer*”. You will be screened for COVID-19 symptoms
    - [980] 442 2000**
    - Atrium LCI Live Answer**
  - We will try to use Virtual Consults\* to help co-manage you while in hospital
  - The goal is for SHORT admissions and QUICK discharge.
    - **The longer you are in there, the higher the risk of getting an infection**
  - **Med2Bed** so you get your prescription before discharge
  - We will avoid Transfusions during admission

# We Ask for Your Understanding...

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- *Please be patient with the nurses and providers in healthcare*
  - They are short staffed
  - They are under a lot of stress
  - They have family members and children they are worried about too
  - Some of them have to isolate themselves from family since they work in the hospital
- **EVERYONE** has to do their part during this difficult time to support each other and to prevent more spread of this dangerous virus

# What about my Exchange Transfusion or Adakveo Infusions?

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- We will review RBC Exchange/ Transfusions case by case
  - We may reduce the total number of blood units for each RBC exchange
  - We may **temporarily** change some patients to Simple Transfusion\*\*
- **We will NOT use Transfusions for Uncomplicated Pain Crisis.**
  - Patient must meet transfusion criteria – have symptoms from anemia AND have Hgb under 6g/dl
- Things may change if situation gets worse and the blood supply changes

# Atrium Health Notice Regarding Elective Surgery



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## **Non-Essential Surgeries, Procedures and Ambulatory Appointments to be Rescheduled**

Rescheduling will minimize the risk of spreading COVID-19 among patients, visitors and healthcare providers

**CHARLOTTE, N.C., March 17, 2020** – Atrium Health, Novant Health and Wake Forest Baptist Health are coordinating together to prepare for and respond to the possibility of increasing cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) spreading in our communities.

Following the guidelines from the U.S. Surgeon General and the American College of Surgeons, Atrium Health, Wake Forest Baptist Health and Novant Health are rescheduling non-essential surgeries, procedures and ambulatory appointments, effective Wednesday, March 18. Any emergency and essential services will continue uninterrupted.

Rescheduling these appointments will minimize the risk of spreading COVID-19 among patients, visitors and healthcare providers. It also allows each healthcare system to conserve critical resources and focus care on those that need it most.



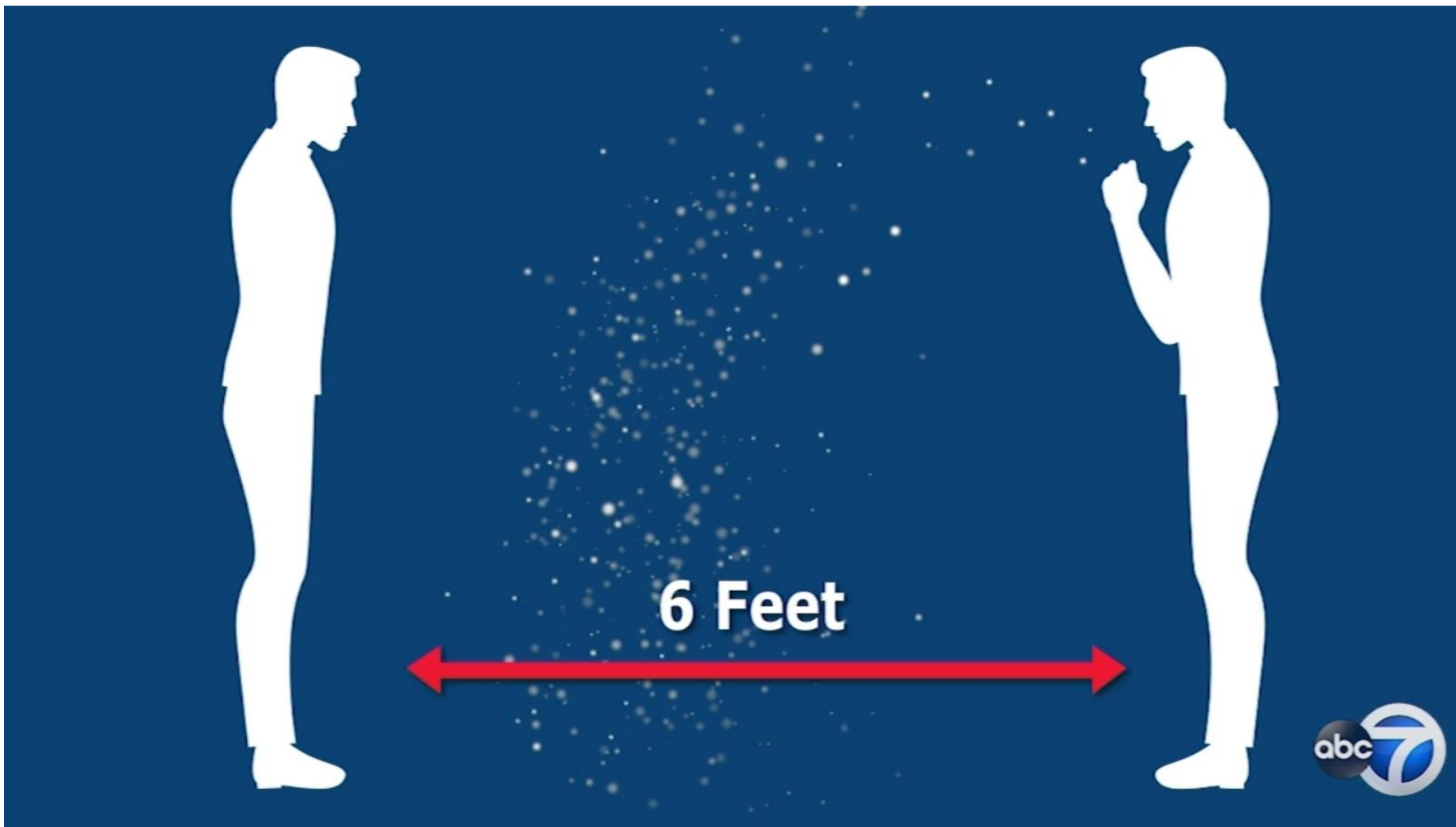
# How Can I Prepare Myself and My Family

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- Make sure you have ordered refills on ALL your medications
  - **Ask your doctor to refill your pain medications**
- **Get a Thermometer!**
- Have some over the counter medications at home – Tylenol, Vitamin D, Vitamin C, Allergy Meds, Benadryl
- Make sure you have enough household items, food, WATER, phone charger to last a few weeks
- Think ahead of what you may need – childcare, pet supplies, care for your parents / grandparents etc
- **Make a list of what you can do to reduce your stress level** – yoga, meditation, music etc
- Know your emergency care plan – who to call, where to go for care etc

# Frequently Asked Questions – What is Social Distancing?

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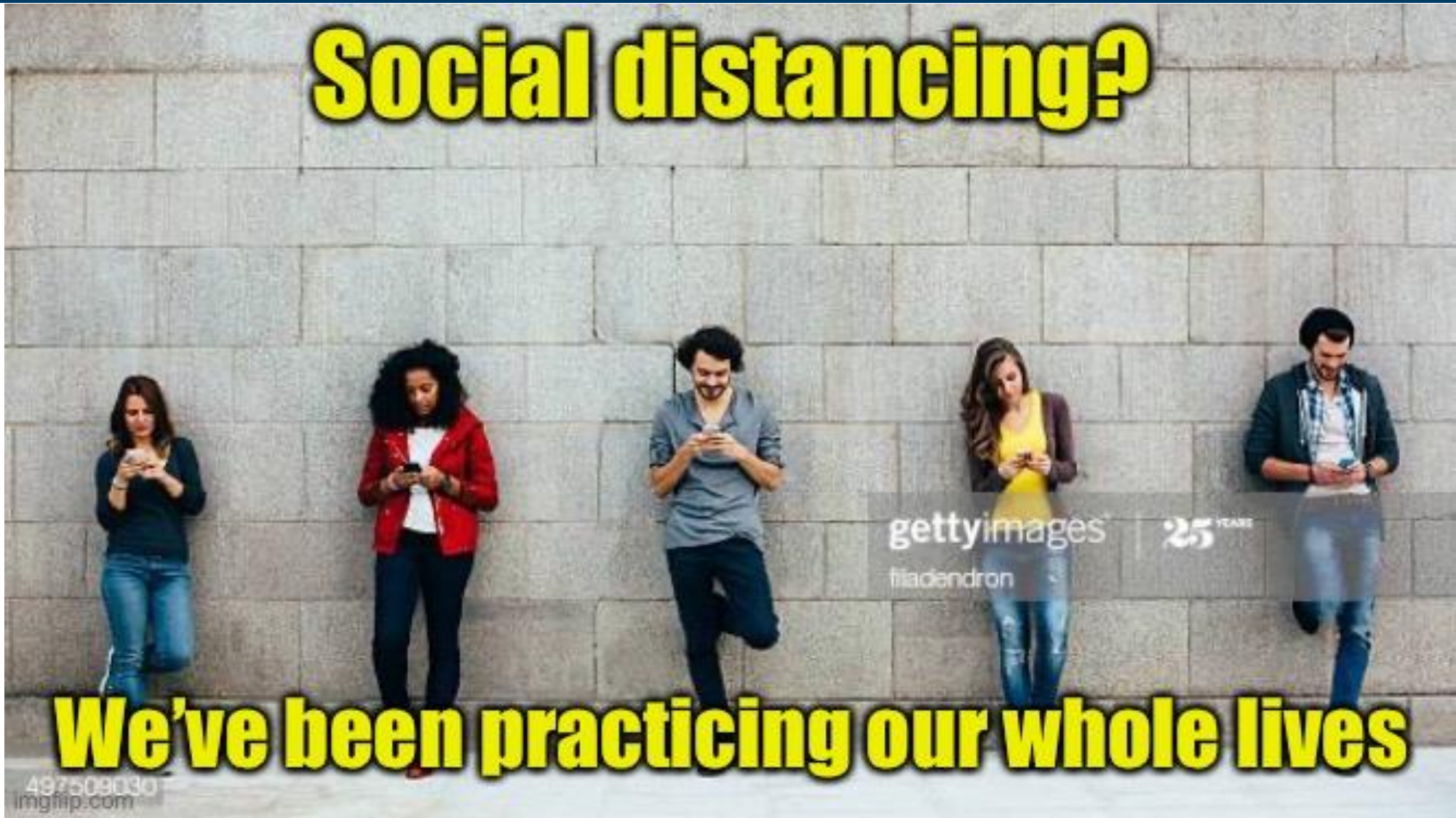


# Social Distancing – It is HARD!



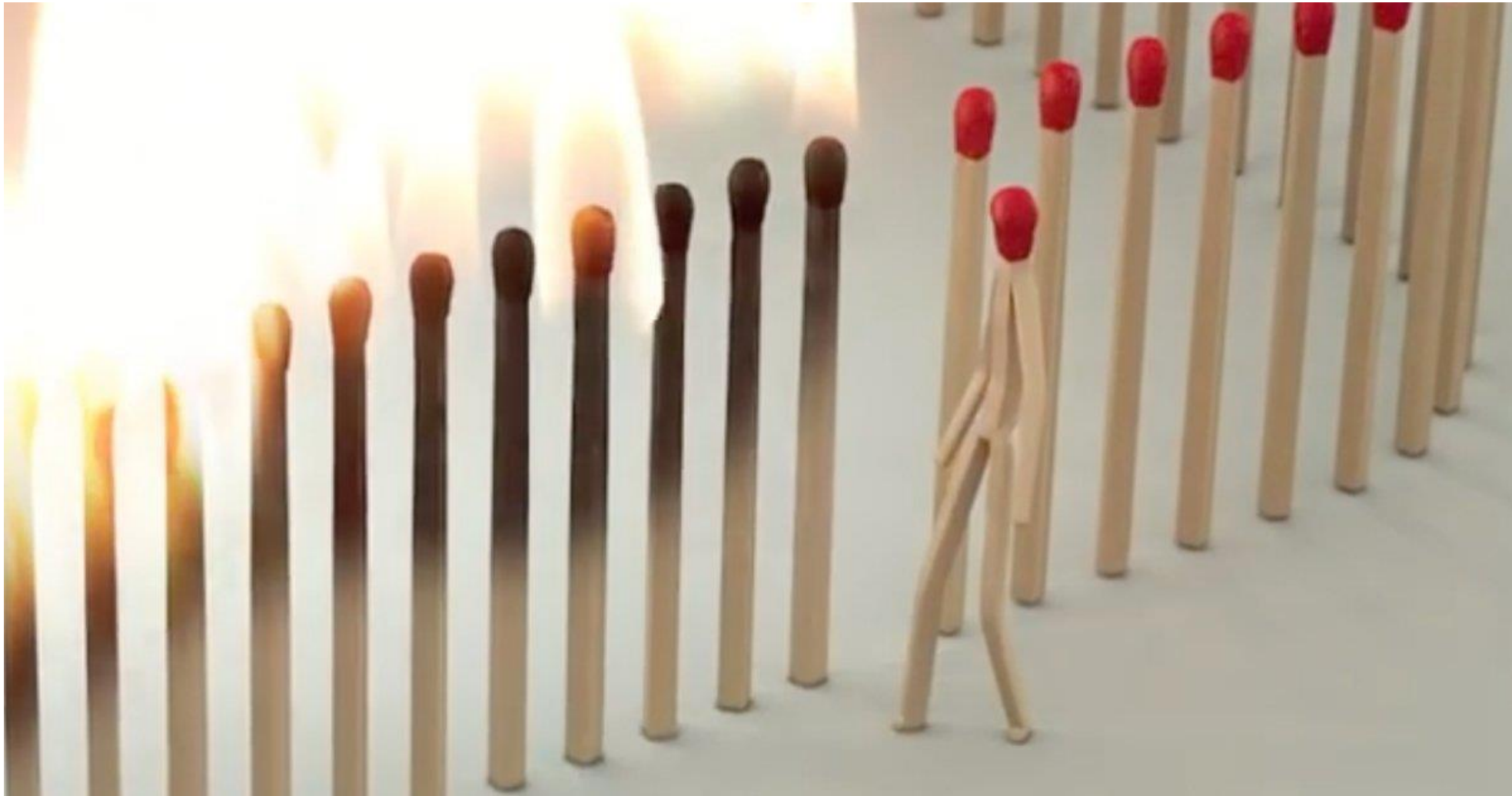


# Social Distancing – Will be Harder for the Older Folks!



# Why Practice Social Distancing?

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# Should I go to the ER if I am Sick?

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- If you have a doctor (SCD specialist, Primary Care Doctor) it is recommended that you **CALL FIRST** for advice before going to the ER.
- ERs are VERY FULL right now and the wait will be **MUCH LONGER** than usual
- PLUS, *you are likely to be exposed to infected people* who do not know yet that they are infected
- Discuss with your provider and come up with the best solution for you.
- You may NOT be able to avoid going to the ER but **we want to try other options first**

# What if I am Having a Pain Crisis? What Do I Do?

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- Carefully weigh your options and call your doctor for advice on what to do
- Consider the benefit of treating your pain at home versus the risk of getting exposed to Coronavirus in the ER/Clinic/Hospital
- **If this feels like a “typical pain crisis” we strongly suggest working with your doctor to manage it at home with increased hydration and increasing your oral pain medication**
  - If you are comfortable with this have your doctor call in extra pain medications for you.
- If you have severe symptoms concerning for COVID-19 or **“*this feels different than my usual sickle cell crisis*”** you may have no choice but to go to the ER
  - Please check your temperature! You will be asked 😊



# Frequently Asked Questions

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- Are there any persons with SCD diagnosed with COVID-19?
  - **YES** we are aware of several SCD +COVID-19 cases. We are not aware of any deaths among those with SCD however this could change
- Is it safe to Travel?
  - **NO.** It is best to avoid all non emergent travel at this time. Please visit the CDC website for up to date travel guidance [www.cdc.gov/covid19](https://www.cdc.gov/covid19)
- What do I do if I am on a Clinical Trial?
  - Thank you for participating in clinical trials for SCD. This is important to push the development of new and more effective treatments. Please get in touch with your research team ASAP to get an update.
  - Atrium is putting a pause on enrolling new SCD patients on clinical trials for now

# Frequently Asked Questions: What about Transfusions?

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- **Continue ALL your treatments** until you talk it over with your SCD provider.
- There is no evidence right now that COVID-19 is transmitted through blood but there is a lot we do not know right now
- Balancing the need for transfusions to reduce things like stroke, acute chest and organ damage must be considered
- Talk to your SCD provider about any risks of missing a transfusion or any concerns you may have
- If there is a shortage of blood supply in your region ask your provider if there are alternatives. This is a complex discussion and will depend on your own personal situation

# Frequently Asked Questions

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- Any Fever > 100.4 may suggest you may have a possible infection
- **Do not rush to the ER.** You should call your PCP or SCD provider and check your temperature with a thermometer. This is Key!

**[980] 442 2000**

**Atrium LCI Live Answer**

- This does not automatically mean you have COVID-19. Please discuss your symptoms with your provider. They will ask you additional questions to narrow down the cause of your fever.
- AVOID Motrin, Aspirin and other Non steroidal Anti-inflammatory agents if you have a fever. Use Tylenol
  - **NSAIDs have been linked with worsening symptoms of COVID-19**



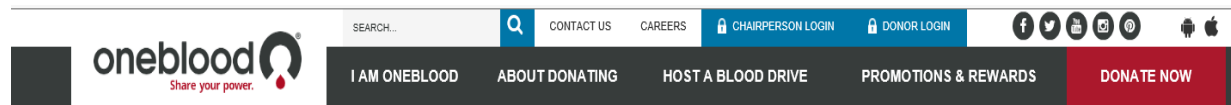
# Frequently Asked Questions

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- I feel fine so far. Is there anything I can do to help others
  - If you know others with SCD contact them by phone, text, social media to provide support and encouragement
  - This is a stressful time and we all need all the support we can get
- **Contact your local Community Based Organization** (Piedmont Health Services, Sickle Cell Partners, NCSCSP Educator Counselors) to stay connected to support and resources
  - They cannot come and visit you in the hospital but can provide virtual assistance
  - They can identify ways that you can support others as well from “afar”
  - Staying connected is very important during times of social distancing😊. We do not want you to feel isolated

# Frequently Asked Questions: What Else Can I Do?

- Encourage your Family and Friends to **Donate Blood!**
- NC is experiencing a blood shortage and we are calling all who are able to donate.
- [www.oneblood.org/donate-now/corona.shtml#](http://www.oneblood.org/donate-now/corona.shtml#)



Concern over the coronavirus is negatively impacting the blood supply.

**ALL Donors Receive A \$20 eGift Card**

**March 13 through March 31, 2020**

Find a Big Red Bus® or a donation center and please donate today.



THE NEED FOR BLOOD DOES NOT STOP.  
IT IS IMPORTANT THAT PEOPLE CONTINUE TO DONATE BLOOD.

Enter your zip code

OR

Enter your Sponsor Code or Name

Include Mobile Drives

SEARCH

The safety of the blood supply, our donors, team members and blood recipients are OneBlood's top priorities.

Donors can take comfort in knowing:

# Where Can I get More COVID-19 Information?

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- Coronavirus (COVID-19) Updates by CDC

[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019)

- Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19 updates) BY Atrium Health

<https://atriumhealth.org/dailydose>

- CDC webinar: What Older Adults Need to Know about COVID-19

<https://youtu.be/TjcoN9Aek24>

- AARP will have a town hall today for older adults on COVID-19

[www.aarp.org/health](https://www.aarp.org/health)

## Questions?

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**Prediction: There will be a minor baby boom in 9 months, and then one day in 2033, we shall witness the rise of THE QUARANTEENS.**

