



Jewish Community  
Council of Montreal

Conseil de la Communauté  
Juive de Montréal

בס"ד

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March 13, 2020

The landscape for the novel coronavirus COVID-19 is rapidly evolving. It is increasingly clear that we need to implement severe measures in order to stop the escalation of the outbreak.

The Jewish Community Council has been in regular communication with public health officials and other experts, and we wish to share our views with you on an urgent basis of what each of us should be doing individually and what we should be doing as a community. With your support and with the help of Hashem we pray that this crisis will be short lived.

#### STAYING HEALTHY

The best way to prevent the spread of infections is to:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Avoid close contact with sick people. Avoid visiting people in hospitals or long-term care centres if you are sick.
- Change your regular greeting. A handshake, a kiss or a hug, should be avoided, as this is likely to expose you to respiratory viruses.
- Practice good health habits. Get plenty of sleep and exercise, manage stress, drink plenty of fluids and eat healthy food.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces, such as toys and doorknobs.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Dispose of the tissue in the trash immediately after you use it, and wash your hands afterwards.
- If anyone develops a fever, cough or any other symptoms of the virus, they should immediately self-quarantine and not go to any clinic.

#### TRAVEL

- No one should be travelling outside Canada unless it's absolutely critical. In particular this means no travel to and from New York City and the surrounding area.

- If you do travel outside the country you should self quarantine for 14 days upon your return. During this period, you should be monitoring your health and that of family members for fever, cough and difficulty breathing. If your child or any member of your family has symptoms of the virus, stay home and call the Quebec public health authority at 811 or 877-644-4545 to inform them. They will provide advice on what you should do.

## SOCIAL DISTANCING

The experts have made it clear that the key to minimizing the impact of the outbreak is social distancing or more precisely severely limiting the opportunities for in person interaction. In practical terms we are recommending that group gatherings and events be limited in numbers as per government guidelines. Bar mitzvahs, marriages and other social events should be kept small and attended by close family only.

Whenever possible we should be working remotely – if you don't need to be at the office, you should not be. If you are sick or have been in contact with someone who is sick, you must not go to work.

The JCC appreciates that we are calling for a radical change in behaviour, but as per medical experts, this is the only way to stop the spread of the illness. At the same time we know that social interaction is vital for our health and well-being, and we are concerned about the impact of this approach on the vulnerable in our community.

These are challenging times but if we work together and act now, we will be able to reduce the impact of the virus. In the interim, we will continue to monitor developments and provide the community with updates as they become available.

Thank you in advance for doing what it takes to protect our community, our families and ourselves, and please do not hesitate to contact me if you have questions or concerns.

Let us hope and pray that this crisis ends quickly and that the community emerges healthy and stronger, as a result.

*Rabbi Benjamin Weiss*  
**Rabbi Benjamin Weiss**  
**Chief Rabbi of Montreal**

  
**Rabbi Saul Emanuel**  
**Executive Director**