



Hindu Forum Britain

HFB

Proud to be British Proud to be Hindu

18-03-2020

Vascroft Estate  
861, Coronation Road  
Park Royal,  
London NW10 7PT  
Phone: 07875015865  
E-mail: [president@hfb.org.uk](mailto:president@hfb.org.uk)  
Website: [www.hfb.org.uk](http://www.hfb.org.uk)

## Coronavirus (COVID-19) Health Awareness Announcement – correct as of 18<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Please forward this important message to friends and family, as well as colleagues and others in the Hindu community.

The UK Chief Medical Officers have raised the risk to the public to 'high'. It is now a pandemic, and it is important that religious organisations are prepared. This document provides guidance for Mandirs and others working in the Hindu community.

The Prime Minister has described this as the "worst public health crisis for a generation", and the aim of the British Government is now to delay the spread of the Coronavirus so that public resources are not overstretched. The Government advice page can be found here

<https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response>

<https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Most people recover from the Coronavirus after having flu like symptoms for about a week. There is no vaccine as yet.

Health advice can be found here - <https://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus/>

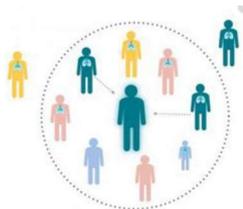
A localised breakdown of people diagnosed with Coronavirus in the UK can be found here

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-track-coronavirus-cases>

The Coronavirus outbreak is going to last for the next few months, and we will be in these extraordinary circumstances for the long haul.

### How does COVID – 19 spread?

#### Person to Person



Through respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes, i.e. close contact (within 6 feet) with an infected person.

By touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching one's own mouth, nose or eyes.



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## Symptoms and precautions

The symptoms of Coronavirus are a cough, a high temperature, and shortness of breath. The symptoms are similar to other illnesses that are much more common, such as cold and flu. There will no longer be any testing for people with symptoms who are at home. Testing is now only going to be for patients at hospital and for the most vulnerable people.

You should stay at home and self-isolate for 14 days if:

- you have a new continuous cough
- you have a high temperature

Even if symptoms are mild, you should stay at home and self-isolate for 14 days. That is when people are believed to be most contagious.

If you have mild symptoms, please do not call 111. Just stay at home for 7 full days.

For more guidance for what to do if you have to stay at home, please visit

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-people-with-confirmed-or-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

If symptoms become worse or they do not get better after 7 days, then you should call 111 for more advice.

## How do you prevent COVID – 19 from Spreading



Wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds



Use a tissue for coughs and sneezes



If you don't have a tissue use your sleeve



Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands



Avoid close contact with people who are unwell

The best way to prevent COVID – 19 spreading is through regular and thorough handwashing with soap and water for 20 seconds

## Travel Advice

As countries respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, including travel and border restrictions, **the FCO advises British nationals against all but essential international travel.** Any country or area may restrict travel without notice.

If you are travelling abroad, please check

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice> to see what the advice is for your particular country .

International school trips are being advised against.

Over 70s are being advised to avoid going on cruises.

India has banned all travel by non-Indian citizens into the country until 15th April 2020. If you have a visa or an OCI card, you will not be able to travel to India during this period unless in emergency.



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## Mandirs (Temples)

Temples may close for pooja and Darshan for general devotees (congregation). All temples should encourage devotees to use online facilities rather than physically gathering as web based darshans of Deities and Poojari performing pooja can still make people feel connected to their Mandir.

## Keeping the Members Safe in the Mandirs if you wish to open Mandir for Devotees.

Make sure that there are enough soap supplies by wash basins

Avoid using cotton towels and paper towels. Use hand dryers.

Have posters up to encourage people to wash their hands regularly whilst at the Mandirs

Be aware that hand sanitizers contain alcohol, so soap and water is the best way to ensure hygiene.

Avoid hugs and handshakes, and instead greet people with a traditional 'Namaste or OM,

**Jai Shree Krishna**, **Jai Shree Ram**, **Jai Mataji**, **Jai Bholenath**, **Jai Swaminarayan**,

as per their belief..

Regularly clean surfaces that will be touched frequently, such as door handles, handrails etc.

Encourage members taking shoes off and putting them back on to wash their hands regularly or wear disposable gloves which are regularly changed

Please display all required notices and posters incorporating 'If you have a cough or a temperature, you should not visit the Mandirs'

Do not distribute Prayer Books

## Cultural & Religious Events

Please postpone all regular activities like events, courses, classes and Kirtans till further notice from the Government.

## Prasadam

Staff and volunteers are encouraged to wear disposable plastic gloves and face mask when preparing and serving Prasadam

Do not touch the hands of the person receiving the Prasadam

Cups and plates should be taken to be washed immediately after use

If someone wishes to have more Prasadam or water/tea, they should be served in a fresh plate or glass/cup

If anyone is coughing near temple Kitchen and Prasadam preparation or serving area, they should be removed from the area immediately

## Older people and Other Vulnerable People

Older people and those with underlying health conditions are most at risk from the Coronavirus, and they appear to have a higher mortality rate.

If you have older relatives, please stay away from them if you have any symptoms, even if the symptoms are mild.

If you live with older relatives and you have symptoms, please stay at least 2 metres away from them at all times and use a separate bathroom to them.

You should also think of what other actions you will take to help older relatives, such as making sure their kitchens are well stocked and they have enough medication available at home.

Mandirs attract a higher proportion of older people, so please be aware of the impact on them if any issues do arise.

Mandirs should try to set up live streaming of programmes on social media so that older people who have to self-isolate can continue to engage as part of an online kirtan, Yoga, chair exercise and other social activities.



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## Funeral and cremation advice

National Association of Funeral Directors have issued guidance :

<https://nafd.org.uk/funeral-advice/>

There are special safety measures for the funeral directors so please follow their instructions.

### Death due to the CV and some general guidance which does not contradict Vedic way of cremating.:

Only allow a small group of close family and friends between 20 and 50.

Do not bring body home for last Darshana and pooja instead perform last rites at the crematorium.

There may be no embalming, (return to the Vedic way of cremating the whole body).

Undertakers may not allow family to dress the deceased, respect the need of the hour.

Upon return from funeral directors , disinfect / wash all your clothes worn at the time separately.

In case if you do dress the deceased, take utmost care and wear all required protective gear.

Follow ' Namaste ' as a usual greeting practice as mourners attending services at Crematoriums are recommended not to shake hands to prevent the spread of the virus.

Do not distribute Prayer/Hymn books and song sheets instead issue prayers and mantra to be recited via social media prior to the funeral.

Upon return from the funeral/ crematoria, carry on normal practice of washing hands, feet and mouth outside in the garden before entering into your home.

Take shower and wash all cloths separately .

Awaiting instructions about storing and dispersing of Ashes .

All Vedic rituals following the death can be performed with utmost care and to suit your needs following Government guidelines.

## Contingency Plans

Now that Coronavirus is a pandemic, there is the possibility of up to 1 in every 5 people being ill at the same time.

Mandirs and organisations are encouraged to consider to close or what contingencies they have to continue operating as normal or restrict activities..

Mandirs/organisations should consider is there enough staff and volunteers to follow full **Health and Safety** advise to operate safely and effectively their premises.

## Signposting for Mandirs/Organisations

Download a [printable poster from NHS England on "Catch It, Bin It, Kill It" \(PDF\)](#) -

Download a [printable Public Health England poster: 'Coronavirus' \(PDF\)](#)

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/south/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2017/09/catch-bin-kill.pdf>

<https://www.scribd.com/document/450317144/Coronavirus-A4-Poster>

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/coronavirus-standard-operating-procedures-for-primary-care-settings/>

<https://www.glasgowlive.co.uk/news/glasgow-news/funeral-cremation-advice-issued-glasgow-17941054>

Regular updates will be provided over the coming weeks, so please keep an eye out for them.



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## Spiritual Guidance

### General wellbeing and Immunity

Built up your immunity and wellbeing by regular practice of Yogasans , meditation , mantra like Mahamritunjaya , Gayatri and Hare Rama Here Krishna and Kirtans .

Eat healthy and nutritious Vegetarian meals as vegetarian diet is good for your health and environment too..

For increasing health of your breathing system , aimed at balancing various airs in the body perform Pranayam.

Anulom- Vilom and Surya Bhedana

Ujjayi

Sitkari

Shitali

Bhastrika

Bharamri

Follow instructions from your Yoga teachers and Guru if you are not confident

If you are not sure or starting afresh ; Consult your doctor before starting any new exercises .

### Environment and wellbeing:

Destroy any harmful bacteria and virus through the Vedic way:

Perform various Yagna at home following webcast by priests from various temples like Maha Mrityunjaya Yagna and Agnihotra.

Hindu version for the Agnihotra together with some spiritual practices which can be done by anyone:

Ever since the Vedic times, yajna karma has been done in India. Agnihotra is very beneficial for the environment as well as giving strength to our body and mind. In the Bharatiya Sanskruti, these rituals have immense spiritual power but at the scientific level there are alsomany gains. This has also been proved through science.

Among these, the most simple and straightforward ritual is Agnihotra. By doing this properly the environment is purified to a great extent. Not only this but the individual who performs the ritual gains physical mental and spiritual purity and protection in all directions are obtained.

Because of the cleansed environment which is produced by the ritual, the spread of germs that lead to disease is restricted and they are eventually destroyed. Therefore the current coronavirus which is causing havoc, Agnihotra can be like a Rama Arrow which destroys it completely. In order to do Agnihotra no need to call a priest at home. Therefore, there are no restrictions in doing it. An ordinary person can do this in 10 minutes anywhere. Its cost is also very little.

By doing this regularly, one is doing one's dharma and at the same time protecting the environment and society. In relation to Agnihotra there are many scientific experiments that have been done.



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How to do Agnihotra havan:

<http://www.agnihotra.org/2015/02/22/what-is-agnihotra/> <https://www.agnihotra.org/2015/03/29/how-to-perform-agnihota-instructions/>

How to do Mahamrityunjaya-Yagya :

<https://www.vedicaashram.com/Yagya-and-Hawan/Mahamrityunjaya-Yagya>

Sewa and help

‘During this tumultuous time : We request everyone to take necessary personal precautions while trying to help fellow devotees , neighbours and those in society who are in need .

‘Sewa Day ‘ has now a nationwide campaign in supporting vulnerable individuals in your area. Many MPs, Councillors & charities have supported our campaign in the hope to bring communities together, yet we know that we can reach more people in their time of need.

follow this campaign and our work here on our social channels:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/sewaday>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/sewaday>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/sewaday>

The HFB is grateful to the City Sikhs, ISKCON , [agnihotra.com](http://agnihotra.com) and Sewa Day .

Disclaimer

This Guidance note is issued for general advise and the HFB can not be legally held responsible for any particular matter or case arising out it. ..

Hindu Forum of Britain is the largest umbrella body with a broad-based membership of over 320 Hindu organisations from different regions and cultural backgrounds in Britain. At the core of the Forum’s activities is a strong belief in the richness and diversity of the Hindu culture, its value system that encompasses respect for all beings and faiths, and a cultural heritage that facilitates community cohesion and coexistence.