

# How to Prevent the Next Pandemic

By Ethan Lindenberger, Unity Consortium Member\*

Right now, every American, and the world at large, is feeling the very real and very serious damage that the COVID-19 pandemic has brought upon us. Stores have closed, people have lost their jobs, and many more are just scared. Most are walking away from their daily news thinking that the answer to “what should we be doing” is to panic. But this isn’t the case.

The outbreak of SARS-2 novel coronavirus is serious, and those that downplay the significance of any pandemic, this one included, are causing more damage than helping to alleviate it. The common advice of washing your hands, not touching your face, social distancing, and staying home are all messages that have prevailed because they’re truly good practices that help reduce the amount of Coronavirus cases. And those that tell you to wear gloves and a mask, to stock all the toilet paper you can, or to begin preparing for an apocalypse are just frightening people away from these very achievable and realistic ways we can stop this outbreak. That’s an important distinction to make for anyone speaking about this outbreak of COVID-19. We need to be prepared, not panicked. We need to take this seriously, but not become scared. We need to take precautions, but not prepare for a zombie apocalypse. See what I mean?

Now, I want you to think about how much you care about this disease. How much of your attention has been given to the outbreak of a single virus. The precautions, news coverage, conversations with friends, coworkers, and family about how they shouldn’t travel and need to wash their hands. I want you to think about how none of those concerns were present before this disease fell on our doorsteps. When we, or the people close to us, were placed in a situation where this new virus could very well have some serious complications if they got sick. I ask you to think about this because we quickly hear about the one possible saving grace throughout all this that becomes the light at the end of the tunnel.

A vaccine for the coronavirus.

For many of us, this disease could be the first we’ve ever encountered that we have taken very seriously. The first time public health became an issue of *personal* health. And now people that never were very passionate about immunizations are praying for a vaccine to be developed soon. It’s eye opening to watch this unfold in front of people, but COVID-19 has awoken the masses and possibly even you, the one reading this article, to the world of preventable diseases and vaccines.

For now no vaccine has been produced for the novel coronavirus. I say that because that could very well change and it could change very soon. But as of now there is not a vaccination against the disease. That may sound like a disheartening truth, but I say that to draw an image for

you. I asked you to think about the impact this disease has had on you, to remember when this became an issue of personal health and not just public health. That moment where fear and worry of COVID-19 reaching you or someone close to you is an opportunity to see how serious diseases can be. How serious viruses and infections can be. And this is an opportunity to see how serious and how important vaccinations are to our public *and* personal health.

As we pray and hope for a vaccine to be manufactured for Coronavirus, the walls and shelves of public health departments and clinics are full of shots for dozens of other diseases. Measles, meningitis, tetanus, Hep. A, Hep. B, and so many other preventable diseases *ALREADY* have a vaccine available. During a pandemic like this where hospitals are beginning to become crowded and doctors are beginning to get overworked, one of the worst possible outcomes for public health is to see vaccination rates decrease. To see people focus so much on one pandemic, that another one starts.

The CDC and WHO have already drawn their attention to this, asking for citizens and health organizations to desperately prioritize immunizations during the outbreak of COVID-19. In our current situation, I'd draw attention to the WHO and their guidelines for immunization response to the COVID-19 pandemic [here](#). If you're like me and coronavirus is present in your state and most healthcare professionals are drawing their attention to that, see situation 5 in the pdf the WHO shares. If there are less cases of Coronavirus in your area, speaking with your family care doctor or speaking to the local health department about making sure you're caught up is a great idea.

Remember that disease outbreaks occur often, and that new vaccines are under development. While it is important to address our current threat and hope for countermeasures to follow soon, we need to also realize that **prevention is better than cure**. If we already had a vaccine for COVID-19, would you have taken the initiative to go out and get it? I'm sure that if somebody told you there's one down the road at your doctors office right now, you'd go get it right away. But that's after needless suffering. If we replaced Coronavirus with measles, the vaccine is already available but because of the inaction of people not getting their measles vaccine, every death would be avoidable and pointless. Praying for one vaccine while ignoring others and wishing you had your shots only after suffering from it, that's a mistake that we cannot make.

So right now, that question we all have in our minds, the one hijacked and misled by the news media and uneducated people, that question of "what should I be doing" becomes a lot more clear. Not only should we take care of ourselves and the people around us, not only should we work to flatten the curve and stop the outbreak of coronavirus, but alongside all of that, we should work to stop *all* outbreaks. **What we should be doing, is preventing the next pandemic. And all it takes is one appointment to start getting caught up.**

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