

Reducing risk of Covid-19: Ministering to the body along with the soul

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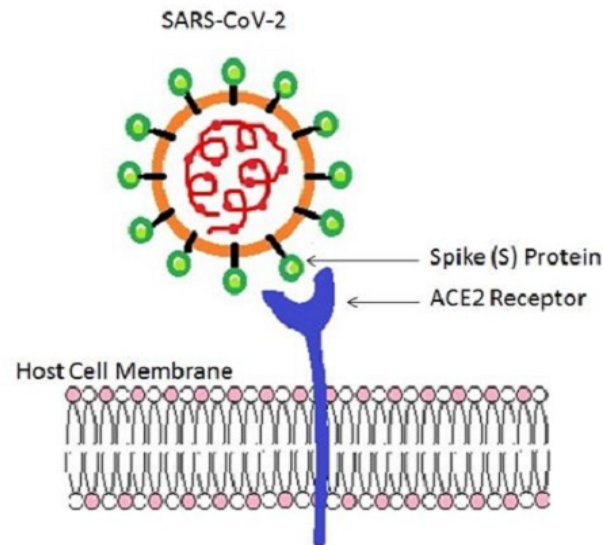


Transmission of Covid-19:

What we know today about saliva and oral secretions

General:

- People become infected when the virus enters the body through the mouth, nose, or eyes.
- The spike on the surface of the virus locks onto ACE-2 on the outside of cells in the throat, nose and eyes
- The virus fits like a lock in a key and enters the body this way



Transmission through saliva and oral secretions

Virus is present in saliva and oral secretions in significant amounts

- Saliva tests are used to diagnose active infection with the virus, similar to nasopharyngeal tests
- Virus is easy to measure in saliva/oral secretions, and the virus is also easily cultured from these sites
- Saliva/oral secretions do not inactivate virus

Sharing utensils shares virus

When a cup or utensil is shared, the virus can be introduced by an infected person. Although not visible, it is still present.

- Holy Communion is not contaminated or altered but the imperfect world introduces a pathogen

The CDC states:

- Do not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, or eating utensils.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, The Director of NIAID and who is Roman Catholic, has said:

- churches should adopt “common sense” measures to protect worshippers and the wider community, like requiring masks, practicing social distancing and prohibiting singing.
- Regarding the distribution of Communion, he said, “I think for the time being, you just gotta forestall that.”



Countries prohibit communion based on public health concerns

The German government banned Holy Communion in the form it is given to Orthodox Christians in fear that it is conducive to the spread of coronavirus and endangers public health.

The government of Ontario and Toronto Public Health released regulations that suspended religious activities that increased the risk of coronavirus transmission. These included:

- Sharing or distributing materials or objects, which may include but is not limited to: books, communion, microphones, prayer mats, prayer shawls, water etc.
- On July 12, all Orthodox parishes in the Ontario region received instruction to follow a single procedure for dissemination of communion, which included the use of separate stainless steel spoons for each individual receiving communion.

Argument: no outbreak documented connected to use of the common cup or spoon

Response:

Impossible to separate out communion from other activities in the Liturgy or at church

Previous studies looked at bacterial infections, not viral

Unethical to do controlled study to test if the shared cup/spoon can transmit infection

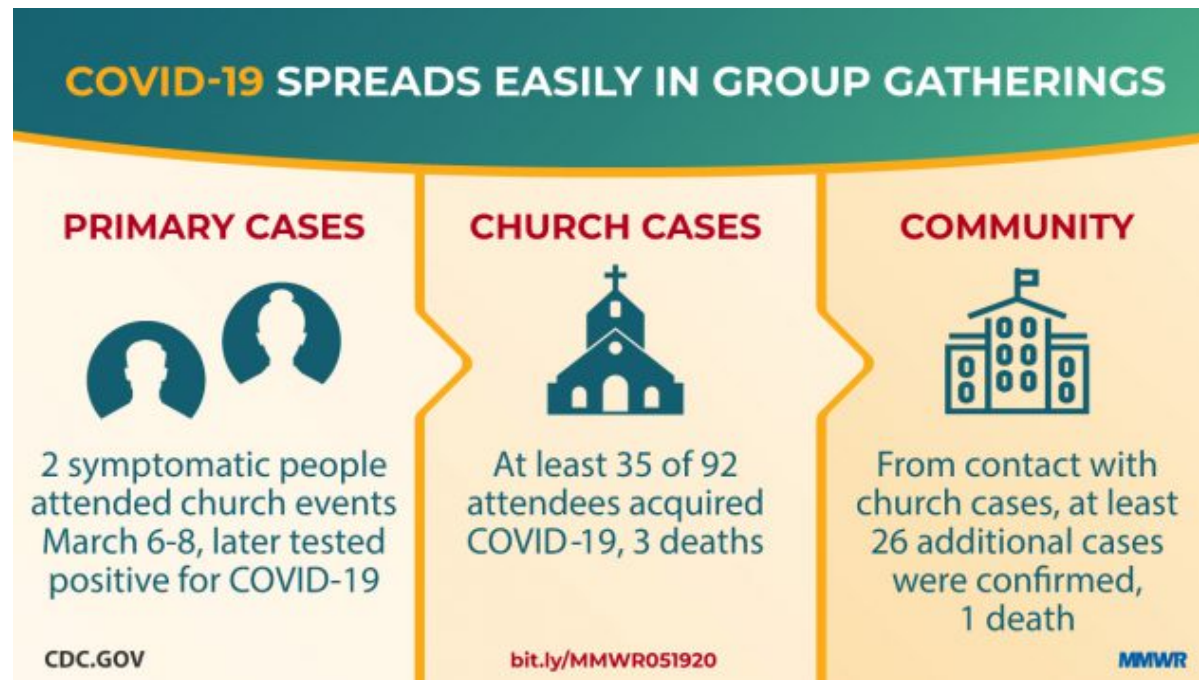
Attending church ranks among the riskiest activities for acquiring Covid 19 (ranked 9 out of 10)

- Multiple households gather/mingle in one location
- Together for a long period of time
- Singing occurs
- Indoor location
- Touch common items
- Communion cup and/or common spoon

Churches have served as “Ground Zero” for numerous large outbreaks



Arkansas outbreak – 35 of 92 attendees infected, 3 died; an additional 26 cases linked community cases, 1 died



Washington State choir practice outbreak – 87% of attendees infected by 1 symptomatic attendee – 2 died

After choir practice with one symptomatic person,
87% of group developed COVID-19



● index case ● 32 confirmed and 20 probable cases ● unaffected person

COVID-19 spreads easily

- Avoid groups
- Stay at least 6 feet apart
- Wear face coverings

CDC.GOV

bit.ly/MMWR51220

MMWR

Ohio church outbreak – 91 infected by 1 initial case

Preventing the spread of COVID-19

COVID-19 SPREAD: CASE STUDY



Covid 19 transmission – we can do better

Risks are real

- Virus in saliva/oral secretions, can be introduced into common cup or spoon

Churches already have made changes to reduce risk

Cannot eliminate risk but can reduce risk further—
duty to others, especially the vulnerable

