

March 27, 2020



TONARI GUMI

Newsletter

CONTACT

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We know that this is a scary time for everyone. But Tonari Gumi (TG) wants to help and do what it can to make the situation better and, hopefully, a little less worrisome. Over the next two weeks, TG staff and some volunteers will be calling those who are members or have come to TG in the past to check on how you are doing and whether or not there is something we can do to be of assistance.

We fully support the policies which are being put in place by government to halt the spread of the COVID-19 virus, but we also recognize that the various restrictions on visiting and social separation can have a negative effect on our seniors and those who may already feel isolated and alone. **Please note that the TG centre in Vancouver and the programs and activities regularly held there are closed and cancelled until further notice.** However, we're still very busy at TG, as follows:

- TG's staff and volunteers are still delivering Japanese meals-on-wheels and calling seniors under our Telephone Buddy program.
- Depending on the need and on how long this emergency continues, TG is ready to provide additional services and activities (in a safe & effective manner).
- As noted above, TG staff and volunteers will be calling members and other seniors in the community and will be asking how TG might be of additional help.
- If you know of someone who might be lonely and who could benefit from a call from TG, don't hesitate to contact TG and we'll get back to you or that individual as soon as possible. We do care, and we want to help. Call TG at (604) 687-2172 or email at info@tonarigumi.ca.
- Please enjoy our newsletter below edited by Makiko Suzuki & Mayumi Spry.

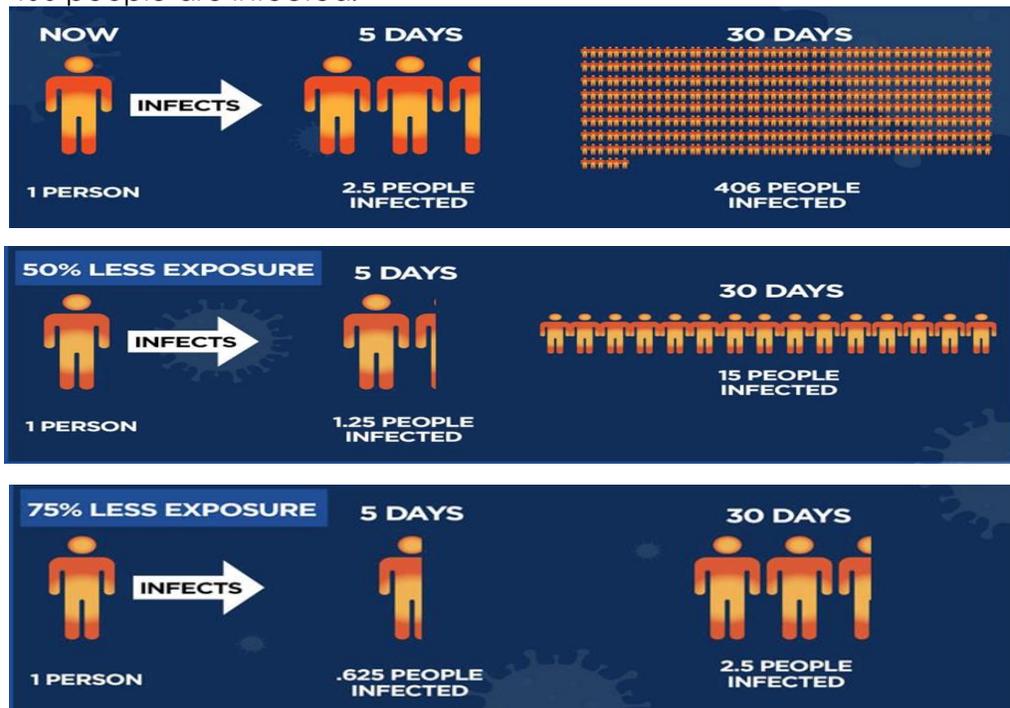
Dear TG friends,

The month of April gets its name from the Latin word aperio, meaning “**to open** [bud],” reflecting the growth of plants with increasing light and warmth. Especially this year the meaning could easily refer '**to open** your heart with kindness to others and to receive from others also.'

News about Covid-19 is changing rapidly, and it is stressful for all of us. At Tonari Gumi we will try to keep you updated with the latest information provided by official health and social agencies to help you understand how you can stay safe.

Social Distancing is a term used to describe actions taken that can stop or slow down the spread of a highly contagious disease. A space of 2 meters is recommended between others. Generally, the idea is to stay away from crowded situations. Not only does it protect you; but you might also be unknowingly infected and be spreading the disease to others.

Why is this important? By reducing contact and exposure to other people, the virus has less opportunities to infect others. The diagram below based on research from Dr. Signer, with the University of California, shows how one infected person, not showing symptoms for five days and not practicing social distancing can spread the virus to 2.5 people. In turn within 30 days, 406 people are infected.



According to this research, if that one infected person reduced his exposure to others by 75%, that's when the infection chain is greatly reduced to the point that it ideally stops.

Credit:
 Robert A.J. Signer Ph.D.,
 Assistant professor of Medicine at the University of California, San Diego
 Gary Warsaw, Art Director



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Social isolation is the lack of meaningful social interactions with family, friends, neighbors and others. This could be a serious issue for seniors, leading to loneliness and feelings of sadness. Unfortunately, the safest option to avoid infection for everyone, including seniors, is to stay indoors and away from community activities. Practicing social distancing does not need to result in social isolation. You can keep in contact with others by phone calls, emails, video calls and even sending letters. Remember that you are not alone. TG telephone Buddies is a great program and a great way to enjoy a regular friendly call. Also, we need telephone volunteers; maybe you can be the friendly caller – sharing your kindness with others. If you can help, volunteer by emailing info@tonarigumi.ca.



Remember that there are also many positive actions you can take to stay healthy.

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Simple Wellness Tips for Seniors:

- ❖ Seniors are the most vulnerable population with this virus, so it is very important to stay home as much as possible to reduce your risk of getting infected.
- ❖ If you must leave your residence, keep away from crowds, practice social distancing and wash your hands with soap and water when you return.
- ❖ Consider ways of getting groceries or supplies brought to you. Enlist your family, friends or social networks like TG.

Look after yourself, try deep breathing and stretches. Also remember to drink a lot of liquids, this keeps your body strong and able to fight off infections and viruses.



Question – How are you keeping social distance?

"I'm just working in my garden, there's nobody there and it's so nice to be outside. Also, I found out my local grocery store has early hours shopping for seniors so I go then. There's hardly anyone there at that time and the shelves are all full"

"I'm mostly working by myself, not going to the store. Hey, I'm not worried about toilet paper, gee during the war, out in Alberta, we just used newspaper. Just crinkled it up to soften. But got black bum though...."

"I have asthma and so I only go out if really necessary. I keep a lot of space between me and others. It's a bit boring inside all the time, so I've started calling some of my friends, who I don't usually phone. It was great and they just love talking."

TG April Question – What are you doing that's new or different these days? TG members are also asked to submit their favourite cherry blossom photos and we will include some of these in our next newsletter.