New York City is still in the middle of a pandemic. COVID-19 continues to spread and there are risks any time you gather with others outside your home, especially in large groups. If you decide to join a public protest, use the tips below to better protect yourself and the people you care about.

Prepare Before You Go Out

- **Stay home if you do not feel well.** If you go out, you risk getting others sick. If you have an underlying health condition that increases your risk of severe COVID-19, or are 65 or older, consider staying home to protect yourself. You can take action in other ways from home by supporting local community organizations and contacting your legislators.
- **Wear face coverings correctly.** Make sure your face covering fully covers your nose, mouth and chin; this will help prevent droplets from spreading when you speak or if you decide to chant. Remember that you can spread COVID-19 even if you do not have any symptoms.
- **Carry only what you need to keep you safe.** Carry alcohol-based hand sanitizer, an extra face covering, your own water bottle, snacks, an ID, and any medication you may need (for example, an inhaler).
- **Carry soapy water and tap water in squirt bottles.** If you are exposed to pepper spray, wash the area with soap to break up the oil. After that, the area should be rinsed with water. Avoid rubbing your eyes or face since it can make the burning worse and could spread COVID-19.
- **Go with a small group.** It is better to march surrounded by people you know. That way, if someone tests positive for COVID-19 later, you can make sure your friends get tested too.
- **Have a plan.** Prepare yourself mentally — map out the route, establish exit routes and possible detours.

Keep Safe While You Are Out Protesting

- **Use noisemakers, drums and written signs.** Limit how much you chant or yell to reduce possibly exposing others. Shouting is like coughing: you exhale tiny droplets that can potentially spread the virus to people around you.
- **Physical distancing is still important.** Keep as much physical distance as possible between yourself and others, especially people that are not part of your group.
- **Keep practicing healthy hand hygiene.** Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer and avoid touching other people or things. Also avoid touching your face. If you must touch your face to adjust your face covering, use hand sanitizer before and after.
- **Bring your own (BYO) supplies and do not share.** Avoid sharing water bottles, microphones or megaphones.
- **Take care of your physical and mental health.** Consider when you may need to leave an unsafe situation.

What to Do Once You Get Back

- **Assume you have been exposed to COVID-19 and get tested.** Get a test for COVID-19 five days after exposure. Visit nyc.gov/covidtesting or call 311 for more information. Testing is free at many sites, including those sponsored by the NYC Department Health of Health and Mental Hygiene and NYC Health + Hospitals. Test results will not be shared with law enforcement.
- **Avoid contact with others** particularly those who may be at greater risk of severe COVID-19 illness (including older adults and anyone with an underlying health condition).
- **Wash your hands** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds as soon as you get home.
- **Take care of your mental health.** If you need additional support, call NYC Well 24/7 at 888-NYC-WELL (888-692-9355).

The NYC Health Department may change recommendations as the situation evolves.

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