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Fellow Warriors,

You hear it all the time during flu season: wash your hands to prevent the spread of flu. You may have heard advice encouraging you to do the same to stop the spread of COVID-19. But do you know why this simple practice works so effectively? Washing your hands with soap and water breaks up the molecules of the virus and washes them away, preventing the virus from infecting you or others.

To be able to effectively and reliably break up the virus cells, you must wash your hands thoroughly and vigorously for at least 20 seconds. Doing this can be incredibly effective! In fact, a study showed that when a group of elementary aged school children participated in supervised handwashing 2-4 times per day, the spread of a similar virus was reduced by 47%. While it is important to wash your hands, it is also important that we all regularly disinfect surfaces.

COVID-19 has been shown to live for up to three days on various surfaces. If you must leave your home for essential services, be sure to wash your hands as soon as you return and disinfect any surfaces you may have touched. If someone in your home is ill, it's also important to regularly disinfect. Applying soap and water plus commonly used disinfectants to frequently touched surfaces will break up the virus and carry it away, in the same way soap kills and carries away the virus on your hands.

We hope you and your family are able to regularly take these simple steps, which will help prevent the spread of COVID-19, and help your family to stay well. For more information on preventing the spread of COVID-19, visit www.tea.texas.gov/staywell.

Remember, by standing apart now, we can all stand together again soon.

We can do this!

Bobby Templeton