

I'm tired of COVID-19!

"I'm tired of COVID!" This is a mantra I hear from co-workers, friends, and Facebook. I think we are all experiencing an exhaustion which goes with a long-term disease outbreak. Most of us in the United States have never experienced anything like this. Many speculations have been made, causing people to feel like they have been duped. With the statistics in Minnesota, some feel like they are safe now, as numbers have seemingly shown some plateaus and overall deaths are fewer. Overall, people are forgetting to protect themselves.

What started out as the excited rush to get all the preparations in place gave way to living with different demands. For some, the emotional bandwidth needed to sustain response mode has been pushed to a breaking point. They feel, "Enough is enough!" People are trying to work from home or return to a different work environment. Parents are trying to ensure that their kids experience summer without over-exposing them. They are looking ahead to fall and wondering what will happen with school. Fatigue. Irritability. Even a grocery run is no longer a break. It requires an entire thought process from how to protect yourself and others to getting in and out as quickly as possible. Impatience. A desire to temporarily curl up and shut out the world leading to self-reproach. A desire to just say, "I've done my part, and I'm done!"

It's time to take a deep breath. We aren't done yet. If our grandparents or great-grandparents could survive the 1918 flu, WWI and WWII, with the Great Depression in between, we can do this!

Though numbers in Minnesota appear to ebb and flow, as Health Commissioner Malcolm has stated, we have yet to see 5 days in a row of decrease. Many other states are experiencing a spike in COVID-19 cases. For some of these states, it is the second wave. That second wave might still be coming to Minnesota. However, there are things we can do to lessen it. Things we can do to protect ourselves and others. Things we need to continue to do: wash hands, frequently, the right way. (This one really shouldn't be a burden. We should have been doing it all along!) Using hand sanitizer when you enter or leave a new premise, so that you aren't carrying any germs on your hands from one venue to another. Maintain social distancing. Just because the people in line in front of you are not, doesn't mean you shouldn't. Protect yourself and be the example. Wear a mask if you are going to be in public, especially if you know it will be difficult to maintain a 6' bubble.

Here are some more ideas. **Stay home.** Barbeque outside, play yard games, practice your bow or your casting or whatnot, to entertain yourselves outside. **Keep your circle small.** Yes, we can visit friends and family again. But keep your circle small. Invite only your closest friends over, to limit exposure. Visit only family and friends that are not at risk for severe infection. Keep in touch with the others over the phone or video chat. **Recreate outside.** Minnesota offers hundreds of trails to hike and/or bike. We have lakes to fish, kayak or boat, and swim in. Go camping! Local county campgrounds are inexpensive. No camper? Tent or rent a rustic cabin and enjoy the outdoors with your family. Roast hotdogs and have s'mores over a bonfire.

Yes, it is difficult to maintain the COVID-19 protective measures for so long. But we are Northerners! We are tough. And it is going to take more than a few inconveniences to throw in our towels. It is summer, enjoy yourself and enjoy being outside, but remember to protect yourself. You don't want to be one of the 10% infected that ends up spending some of their summer in a hospital bed.