

**Jewish Orthodox Women's
Medical Association**

JOWMA Preventative
Health Hotline
929-4-GEZUNT
929.443.9868

JOWMA Preventative
Health Podcast
All Major Platforms



Email
health@jowma.org

Follow us @
[jowma_org](https://www.facebook.com/jowma_org)

As both doctors and members of the various Jewish communities in NY, NJ and beyond, we are here to update you regarding the spread of COVID-19 and the ongoing health situation both in our communities and at large.

We cannot completely stop the current infection from spreading nationwide. However, at this point in time the impact we CAN make, even more so as we live in highly interactive communities, is to slow down the speed at which the virus is spreading. Containment has been shown to be effective, allowing for better outcomes and survival (e.g. Hong Kong and Singapore). Countries that did not follow containment protocols early enough are overwhelmed with critically ill patients and are currently incapable of providing adequate basic and advanced life support care (e.g. Italy). There are limited critical care resources including ventilators, ICU beds, protective gear and healthcare providers in the USA. A rapid rise in cases of COVID-19 will overwhelm our resources as well.

We recommend the following for the sake of pikuach nefesh:

1. If you are sick or someone in your home is sick, stay home and contact your primary care physician.
2. We strongly encourage those who are able to work from home to do so immediately. We encourage everyone to minimize nonessential outings and remain at home. The elderly and those with underlying medical conditions such as heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, lung disease, and the immunocompromised should take extra care to follow social distancing.
3. All schools should be closed at this time. There should be no playdates between children of different families and no visits to playgrounds and other children's activities.
4. Restaurants should be restricted to pick-up and delivery only. Groceries should be ordered online wherever possible and without an increase in necessary goods so as not to create a shortage of supplies.
5. Reach out (by phone or email) to the elderly, high risk, and those in quarantine to see if they need help with anything including groceries and medicine.
6. Consider maintaining contact by phone or video with friends and loved ones to keep relationships strong and avoid feelings of isolation. We will get through this together but separate!

Regarding Jewish customs and ritual, from a medical perspective there are tremendous concerns regarding its ability to rapidly spread COVID-19. One should implore his or her own Rabbinical authorities to join other Rabbinical leadership in requesting and abiding by the following temporary changes:

1. Shuls should be closed for all minyanim, shiurim and other gatherings. There should be no home minyanim.
2. There should be no public celebrations for smachot. Shiva visits should be by phone/video.
3. Religious rituals such as brit milah and levayot should be restricted to a small group of family members and a minyan.
4. Male mikvaot should close. Women mikvaot that remain open should do so at the guidance of CDC and local health authorities. Appointments should be spread out and limited in number at any given time to allow for disinfection of facilities. Women under mandatory quarantine or who are experiencing symptoms of illness should consult their own Rav regarding alternative arrangements.

It is with great difficulty that we make these recommendations that will impact so many of our daily lives and routines. We do so with the acknowledgment of CDC recommendations as well as medical experience and learning from both past and present events. These recommendations are made with one singular goal, to protect the sanctity of life and prevent pikuach nefesh. We hope that these changes will be temporary, and we pray that these times pass with minimal harm to our communities and the global world.

JOWMA Board of Directors

Eliana Fine, MD Candidate 2021 *Founder & CEO*
Ilana Margulies, MD Candidate 2020 *Treasurer*
Mira Hellman-Ostrov, MD, Gynecologic Oncology *Secretary*
Miriam A. Knoll, MD, Radiation Oncology *President*
Bat-Sheva Lerner Maslow, MD, Reproductive Endocrinology *Chief Marketing Officer*
Chana Weinstock Neuberger, MD, Medical Oncology *Vice President*
Sherri Goldstein Orzel, MD, Pediatrics *Vice President*

JOWMA Preventative Health Committee

Maureen Nemetski, MD, PhD, Pediatric Emergency Medicine, *Committee Co-chair*
Alisa Minkin, MD, Pediatrics, *Committee Co-chair*
Joanna Loewenstein, MD, Internal Medicine
Ellie R. Carmody, MD, MPH, Infectious Diseases
Sheindel Ifrah Goldfeiz, BA
Bracha Gluck