Singing in the time of COVID

Key Safety Considerations

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Objectives

- Virology of COVID-19. The Mode of Transmission
- Identify and mitigate the risk of COVID-19 transmission in community of faith settings
- Establish best practices to keep singers, staff, and congregation safe

COVID-19 Virology: Mode of Transmission

In Support of Aerosols Transmission

- Growing concern that singing may be a super-spreading activity. Do we have supporting Evidence?
- WHO initially postulated that droplet and fomite were primary mode of transmission. Airborne??
- The concern for airborne transmission grows due to rapid spread, previous findings from respiratory laboratory studies, high concentration of COVID particles in the air from the medical areas housing COVID positive patients (China), and COVID spread through aerosols generated from the breath of asymptomatic persons.

Not in Support of Aerosols Transmission

- Studies supporting aerosols transmission are conducted in lab not clinical settings.
- Presence of virus in aerosols does not necessarily lead to infection.
- Spread of COVID infection through aerosols depends on the infective potential of the virus, viral load, ventilation, individual susceptibility and other factors.
- No consensus on the mechanism of spread and the impact on a developing a clinically relevant diseases transmission

Risk Factor: is Singing a Super-Spreading Event?

What We Don't Know

- Available data about respiratory diseases spread from droplet and aerosols during vocalization are neither from singing nor from COVID infections.
- Does the type of phonation affect the number of aerosols generated?
- Current recommendations for singing safely are from past studies and common sense.
- Which protective measure(s)?

What We Know

- Louder phonation resulted in greater aerosols generation
- The aerosolized viral load risk increases by;

  a) singing or congregating for longer periods of time

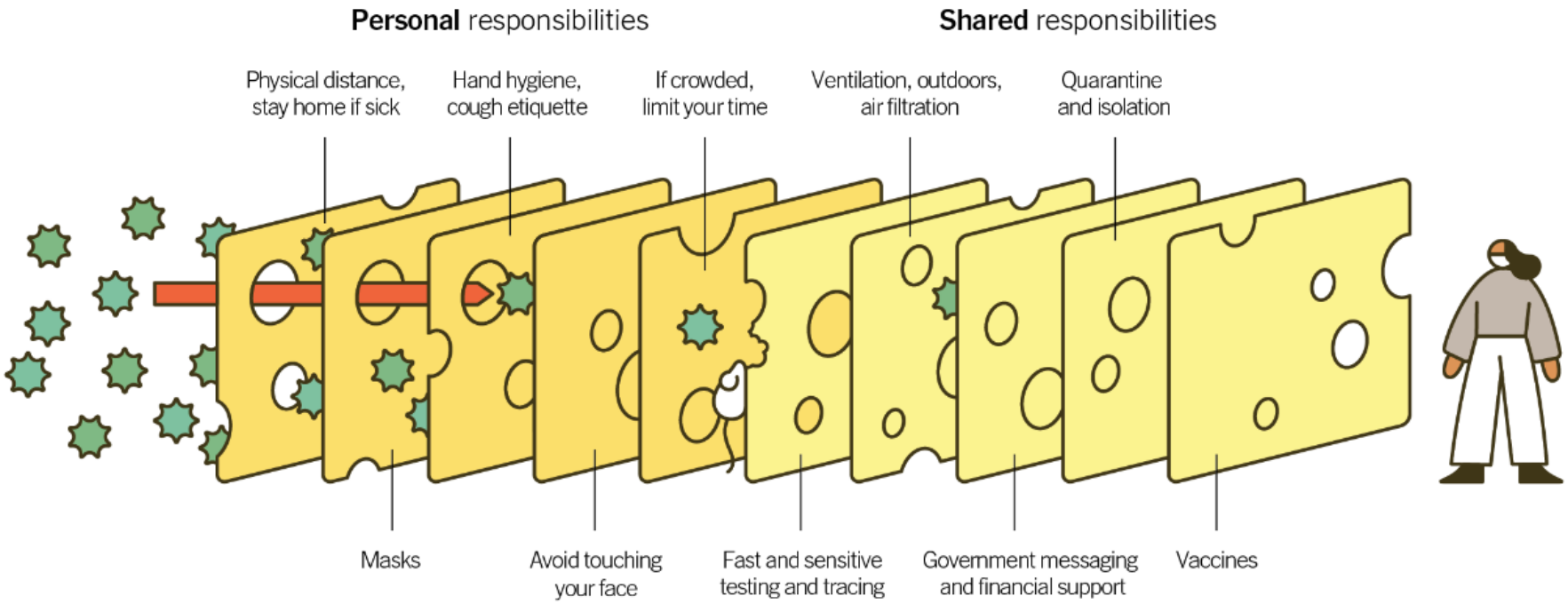
  b) increasing the number of infected singers (choir or congregation member) in a closed space

  c) The limited ability or inability to clear the air in the space (quality of ventilation)

Identifying and Mitigating the Risk of COVID-19

Multiple Layers Improve Success

The Swiss Cheese Respiratory Pandemic Defense recognizes that no single intervention is perfect at preventing the spread of the coronavirus. Each intervention (layer) has holes.



Source: Adapted from Ian M. Mackay (virologydownunder.com) and James T. Reason. Illustration by Rose Wong

Mitigation: Key Interventions

COVID-19 Testing

- COVID-19 testing before each choir session, in addition to body temperature and other screening.

COVID-19 Vaccination

- The risk of transmission significantly decreased when herd immunity (70-80%) is achieved among the congregation through vaccination.

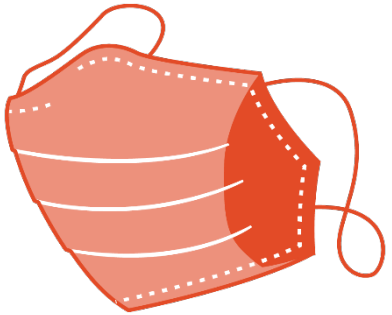
Social Distancing

- Given the epidemiology of the virus, social distance is the optimal way to reduce the spread of COVID-19

Ventilation

- Advanced techniques for air ventilation (HVAC) is recommended when ventilation is not adequate

Masks and Face Coverings



Masks and Face Coverings Overview

The CDC currently recommends wearing face coverings in public.

Benefits of masks and face coverings. Studies show that people with minimal or no symptoms can still have COVID-19. According to the CDC, while wearing face coverings shouldn't replace social distancing, face coverings can help prevent the transmission of COVID-19.

Guidelines vary based on location and industry—and some employers are required to provide face coverings to employees. Organizations should check with local guidelines and laws regarding face coverings, and seek legal counsel when implementing any policies or changes.

COVID-19 Screenings

Conducting Screenings

Standard practices for screenings may include screening of employees as they enter a work area. Screenings may include:

- General screening questions
- Assessment of COVID-19-related symptoms
- Taking the temperature of the employee
  - Temperatures should be taken using a sanitary, no-touch thermometer.
  - According to the CDC, temperatures over 100.4 F are consistent with COVID-19 related symptoms.

Best Practices for Singing During COVID-19 Pandemic

- Communication with local and State authorities to determine current mitigation levels in your community.
- Rehearse outside when possible.
- Rehearse alone, outside, in shift, remotely, or in smaller groups for a shorter duration.
- Use PPE, at least cloth face masks.
- Limit extraneous activities (eg, breaks, socializing, food etc).
- Wipe down items that have been set up or touched by others before and after use (chairs, scores/paper music, instruments, music stands, etc).
- Screen for symptoms and encourage members to stay home when they are sick.
- Avoid direct contact (eg, hand-shaking, joining hands)
- Practice meticulous hand hygiene.

References

- COVID-19 Vaccine Tracker: How Many People Have Been Vaccinated In The U.S.? : Shots - Health News : NPR
- Naunheim, M. R., Bock, J., Doucette, P. A., Hoch, M., Howell, I., Johns, M. M., Johnson, A. M., Krishna, P., Meyer, D., Milstein, C. F., Nix, J., Pitman, M. J., Robinson-Martin, T., Rubin, A. D., Sataloff, R. T., Sims, H. S., Titze, I. R., & Carroll, T. L. (2020). Safer Singing During the SARS-CoV-2 Pandemic: What We Know and What We Don't. *Journal of voice : official journal of the Voice Foundation*, S0892-1997(20)30245-9. Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvoice.2020.06.028
- Considerations for Communities of Faith | CDC

Questions???

Thank you!!!