

As a layperson, trying to follow #Singapore's #Covid19 messaging since early 2020 has become incredibly confusing and just so damn exhausting.

This is a Covid fatigue thread/rant.

We've been praised for our handling of the pandemic (despite some serious fuck-ups, like with the migrant worker dormitories), but if you're living in Singapore trying to follow the comms, it's mind-boggling.

Yes, we have to keep in mind that #Covid19 is new and there's still so much that we don't know about it. Things change as the science reveals more. That's understandable. But there's still a lack of clarity in communication that makes people more anxious and uncertain.

The way the government talks about pandemic measures has changed multiple times. When #Covid19 cases first emerged, they pointed us to the DORSCON measures to give an idea of what #Singapore's plans will be like depending on the situation.

Remember DORSCON? There was a chart and everything: <https://t.co/Zdhy7YTzAY>

Only they didn't stick to it, moving us up to DORSCON Red levels while insisting it was still Orange. Then DORSCON went out the window completely. <https://t.co/puYvMOKVTp>

	GREEN	YELLOW	ORANGE	RED
Nature of Disease	Disease is mild OR Disease is severe but does not spread easily from person to person (e.g. MERS, H7N9)	Disease is severe and spreads easily from person to person but is occurring outside Singapore. OR Disease is spreading in Singapore but is (a) Typically mild i.e only slightly more severe than seasonal influenza. Could be severe in vulnerable groups. (e.g. H1N1 pandemic) OR (b) being contained	Disease is severe AND spreads easily from person to person, but disease has not spread widely in Singapore and is being contained (e.g. SARS experience in Singapore)	Disease is severe AND is spreading widely
Impact on Daily Life	Minimal disruption e.g. border screening, travel advice	Minimal disruption e.g. additional measures at border and/or healthcare settings expected, higher work and school absenteeism likely	Moderate disruption e.g. quarantine, temperature screening, visitor restrictions at hospitals	Major disruption e.g. school closures, work from home orders, significant number of deaths.
Advice to Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Be socially responsible: if you are sick, stay at homeMaintain good personal hygieneLook out for health advisories	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Be socially responsible: if you are sick, stay at homeMaintain good personal hygieneLook out for health advisories	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Be socially responsible: if you are sick, stay at homeMaintain good personal hygieneLook out for health advisoriesComply with control measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Be socially responsible: if you are sick, stay at homeMaintain good personal hygieneLook out for health advisoriesComply with control measuresPractise social distancing: avoid crowded areas

After the "circuit breaker" lockdown, there was no more talk of DORSCON and we went to this phased approach: <https://t.co/uQom8illUf>

Over a year after the end of the circuit breaker, we're still phasing, which isn't necessarily a problem...

...but then there came the "Heightened Alert" versions of phases? <https://t.co/B6ADumInxF> and <https://t.co/y2Ra1eLEdb>

It felt like a kid counting up to 10 and then suddenly going, "...8, 9... 9 and one-fifths... 9 and two-fifths..." hello why did the counting change

Every time there is something like this, there are new rules. It's confusing for the average person, but a nightmare for businesses, especially F&B outlets who are constantly playing catch-up trying to adjust their staffing, stock, etc. to deal with whatever new rules are coming.

Members of Parliament have brought up the difficulties of this uncertainty: <https://t.co/iwo0faH7XS> <https://t.co/Q24loJ90IP>

Ms He Ting Ru (Sengkang GRC) of the Workers' Party (WP) said businesses had little time to react as Singapore eased and then tightened restrictions on dining in, social gatherings and events within the span of just over a month.

She asked for more information on how the multi-ministry task force tackling Covid-19 makes decisions and for the specific metrics it weighs when designing policies, so individuals and businesses can understand the criteria and make plans in advance.

In June, ministers sketched out this plan for **#Singapore** to treat **#Covid19** as endemic: <https://t.co/ra0BVDu59r>

Their plans were predicated on high rates of vaccination, which we've achieved. 80% of Singapore's population is now fully vaccinated.

But things don't look like we're treating **#Covid19** as endemic. Instead, the government has put a stop to workplace interactions: <https://t.co/R8VMrjniXy>

They've also aren't ruling out a return to heightened alerts or even a circuit breaker: <https://t.co/6GQOZHUVH>

This is because the number of **#Covid19** cases have gone up, and the authorities are concerned about the rate of transmission. This might translate to more people ending up in ICU: <https://t.co/FZO7rULTXK> <https://t.co/j8j3tKimRT>

"What is of concern to us is not just the absolute number of cases, but the rate at which the virus is spreading. And that's the reproduction rate, or R.

"Currently, the R is more than one. Cases are doubling every week. And if we continue on this trajectory of infection, it means we could have 1,000 (daily) cases in two weeks, or possibly 2,000 (daily) cases in a month."

From the experience of other countries, when cases rise "so sharply" there will be many more cases in the ICU and more people succumbing to the virus, said Mr Wong, who is also the Finance Minister.

"It's not just the unvaccinated seniors. Because even for vaccinated persons, there will be a small proportion of them falling severely ill, and if you have a very high infection caseload, the small proportion will translate to a sizable number of ICU cases and eventually fatalities," he added.

However, the government has earlier denied that the number of ICU beds is an obstacle to Singapore opening up. This is a letter written by a doctor in July calling for attention to ICU capacity: <https://t.co/SWKoeaQGKL>

MOH's responded saying that vaccination, not ICU beds, are the key: <https://t.co/zSpRbTtq1n>

But we now have vaccinations, so...?

A lot of this also has to do with Delta being suuuuuuch a shit: <https://t.co/hiYfwMffAA> <https://t.co/yTFIdpxNGK>

With a base population of 5.7 million unvaccinated people and starting with one case of each variant, at the end of a month, the original virus would have spread to 1,525 people. In contrast, one case of the Delta variant would have infected 366,572 people.

Prof Cook said: "I am confident that if Delta had not showed up, we would have next to no community cases right now."

But Delta did show up, and its higher transmission rate is the reason that the number of infections and unlinked cases remains high despite measures in place. The Delta variant also increases the chances of people getting severely ill.

There's also been talk from the government about possibly giving booster shots not just to the vulnerable and elderly, but also younger adults. Experts have questioned this, 'cos the benefit of a booster for young adults isn't clear at this stage: <https://t.co/yblgh7w3Nz>

Trying to take all this in is exhausting. Over the past few days I've heard from others who are similarly fatigued and frustrated, no longer knowing how much the government's messaging follows what the science actually says, no longer knowing how to parse what we're being told.

I'm not an infectious diseases expert or an epidemiologist. I don't want to pretend that I know better than experts. I want to be a responsible citizen. But I don't know how much of what the govt is saying is based on sound expert advice, either.

It's a lot and it's confusing. ■

cri <https://t.co/ukan9z5Pv7> <https://t.co/esAsQU2iEM>

📅 31ST JUL 2021

In her letter, "Capacity of Singapore's ICU facilities has to be addressed" (July 27), Dr Jaclyn Toh felt that the true limiting factor of Singapore's calibrated opening is our ICU capacity, which she felt was not adequate.

Since the beginning of the pandemic last year, Singapore has set aside dedicated intensive care unit (ICU) beds for COVID-19 patients.

We are able to ramp up ICU capacity to 1,000 beds, having made the necessary room conversions, stockpiled specialised equipment and medications, and trained medical professionals on ICU protocols.

Right now, we have opened up 70 ICU beds, which is a small proportion of our full potential capacity, as the majority of the COVID-19 cases in Singapore have been mild.

A thousand ICU beds is part of our emergency plan, but it is not our planned usage.

In fact, we are trying our best not to use the capacity, because if we do, it will mean that the disease is spreading uncontrollably and causing many cases of severe illnesses.

Instead, we use vaccination to mitigate the severity of the disease, and reduce the need for hospitalisation and intensive care.

Vaccination, not ICU provision, is the key to living with COVID-19.

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