

Maya Puwath - මායා පුවත්

**Bi-Monthly Newsletter of Mahamaya Girls' College
Alumnae Association of North America (MGCAANA)
Volume 16 – Issue 2 – April 2020**



Message from the Editors

Dear Readers

The Newsletter Committee would like to wish you and your family a happy new year! Unlike past years where we spent the new year with family and friends, this year has been a quiet one due to COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, we have included an “avurudu recipe” to reminisce fond memories of the past avurudu.

After careful consideration of the current situation with regard to the COVID-19 pandemic, the MGCAANA Board of Directors (BOD) and the Advisory Board collectively decided on the postponement of the MCGAANA Annual General Meeting that was planned over the Memorial Day weekend in Seattle in May 2020. The BOD hopes that the MCGAANA members agree with their decision and apologizes for any inconvenience caused in this regard, especially those that were planning to attend the AGM in person.

In this edition you will see articles on the COVID-19 pandemic, its impacts, strategies to overcome anxiety during these unusual times, resources to look into if you are in self-isolation. We hope that these articles will be of help to you.

In addition, you will find a poem written by Nilmini Dorabawila in our poetry corner.

We hope you enjoy this edition we have compiled for you. Happy Reading!

The Newsletter Committee

In this issue

- Cancellation: 16th MGCAANA AGM & Dinner
- Sinhala Hindu New Year
- COVID-19
- Wishes to the Werakes
- Poetry Corner
- Recipe Corner
- Mahamaya News
- MGCAANA News



Dhammapadha

*Matta sukhapariccaga
passe ce vipulam sukham
caje mattasukhirh dhiro
sampassam vipulam sukham*



If by giving up small pleasures
great happiness is to be found,
the wise should give up small
pleasures seeing (the prospect of)
great happiness.

[Dhammapada \(290\)](#)

CANCELLATION DUE TO COVID-19: MGCAANA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM) & DINNER DANCE

The Board of Directors (BOD) of MGCAANA have decided to postpone the Annual General Meeting and the dinner dance which was planned for the memorial day weekend in Seattle, WA in May 2020. The BOD and the Advisory Board have collectively made this decision after careful consideration of the current situation with COVID-19. As MGCAANA does not want to put our members at risk by any means, we hope that MGCAANA members will agree with the decision, and the BOD apologizes for any inconvenience this may have caused. Please stay tuned for more information (via an email) on an alternative AGM that will be hosted virtually.

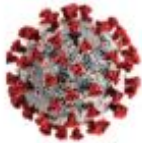
SINHALA HINDU NEW YEAR

In the midst of these challenging times, the Maya Puwath Newsletter committee would like to wish all MGCAANA members a happy Sinhala Hindu New Year. We might not have the same spirit to celebrate this year, but we can still hope for a healthy and a prosperous year ahead.



COVID-19 Information

What you should know about COVID-19 to protect yourself and others



Know about COVID-19

- Coronavirus (COVID-19) is an illness caused by a virus that can spread from person to person.
- The virus that causes COVID-19 is a new coronavirus that has spread throughout the world.
- COVID-19 symptoms can range from mild (or no symptoms) to severe illness.



Know how COVID-19 is spread

- You can become infected by coming into close contact (about 6 feet or two arm lengths) with a person who has COVID-19. COVID-19 is primarily spread from person to person.
- You can become infected from respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks.
- You may also be able to get it by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it, and then by touching your mouth, nose, or eyes.



Protect yourself and others from COVID-19

- There is currently no vaccine to protect against COVID-19. The best way to protect yourself is to avoid being exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19.
- Stay home as much as possible and avoid close contact with others.
- Wear a cloth face covering that covers your nose and mouth in public settings.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.



Practice social distancing

- Buy groceries and medicine, go to the doctor, and complete banking activities online when possible.
- If you must go in person, stay at least 6 feet away from others and disinfect items you must touch.
- Get deliveries and takeout, and limit in-person contact as much as possible.



Prevent the spread of COVID-19 if you are sick

- Stay home if you are sick, except to get medical care.
- Avoid public transportation, ride-sharing, or taxis.
- Separate yourself from other people and pets in your home.
- There is no specific treatment for COVID-19, but you can seek medical care to help relieve your symptoms.
- If you need medical attention, call ahead.



Know your risk for severe illness

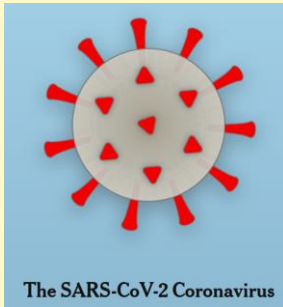
- Everyone is at risk of getting COVID-19.
- Older adults and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions may be at higher risk for more severe illness.



CS-000000-00000000

cdc.gov/coronavirus

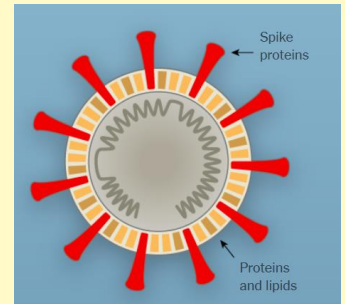
What is COVID-19?



The virus that causes Covid-19 is currently [spreading around the world](#). At least six other types of coronavirus are known to infect humans, with some causing the common cold and two causing outbreaks: SARS and MERS.

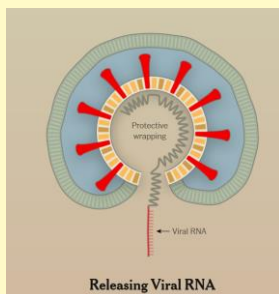
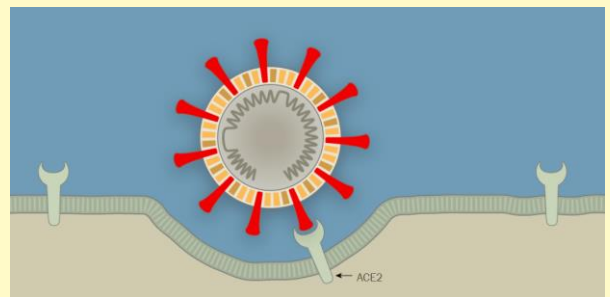
Covered With Spikes

The coronavirus is named after the crownlike spikes that protrude from its surface. The virus is enveloped in a bubble of oily lipid molecules, which falls apart on contact with soap.



Entering a Vulnerable Cell

The virus enters the body through the nose, mouth or eyes, then attaches to cells in the airway that produce a protein called ACE2. The virus is believed to have originated in bats, where it may have attached to a similar protein.

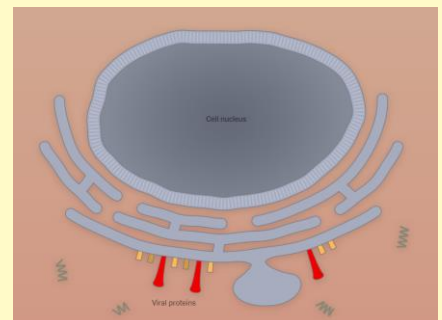


Releasing Viral RNA

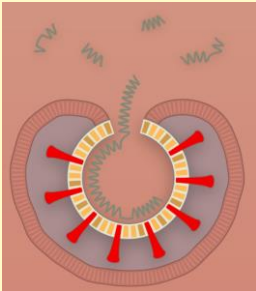
The virus infects the cell by fusing its oily membrane with the membrane of the cell. Once inside, the coronavirus releases a snippet of genetic material called RNA.

Making Viral Proteins

As the infection progresses, the machinery of the cell begins to churn out new spikes and other proteins that will form more copies of the coronavirus.



COVID-19 Information (continued)

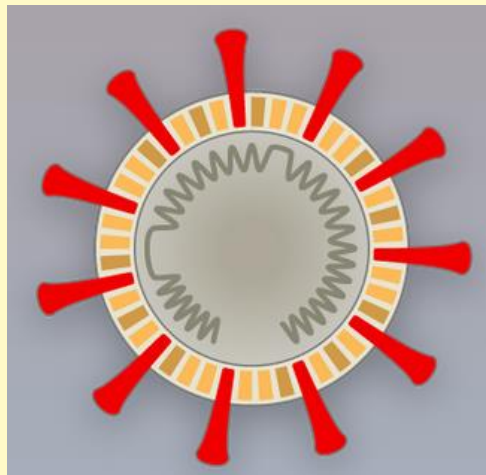
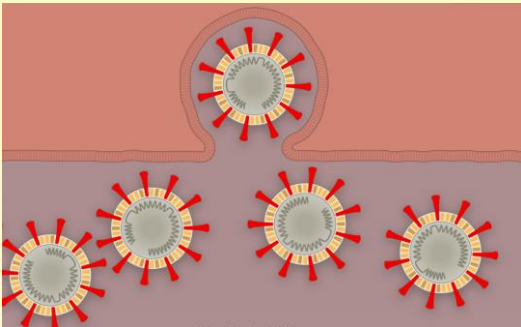


Assembling New Copies

New copies of the virus are assembled and carried to the outer edges of the cell.

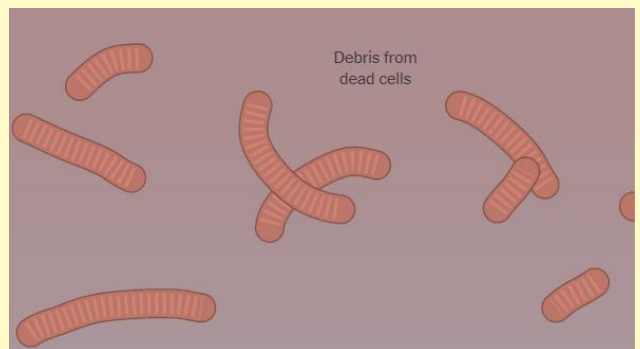
Spreading the Infection

Each infected cell can release millions of copies of the virus before the cell finally breaks down and dies. The viruses may infect nearby cells, or end up in droplets that escape the lungs.



Immune Response

Most Covid-19 infections cause a fever as the immune system fights to clear the virus. In severe cases, the immune system can overreact and start attacking lung cells. The lungs become obstructed with fluid and dying cells, making it difficult to breathe. A small percentage of infections can lead to acute respiratory distress syndrome, and possibly death.



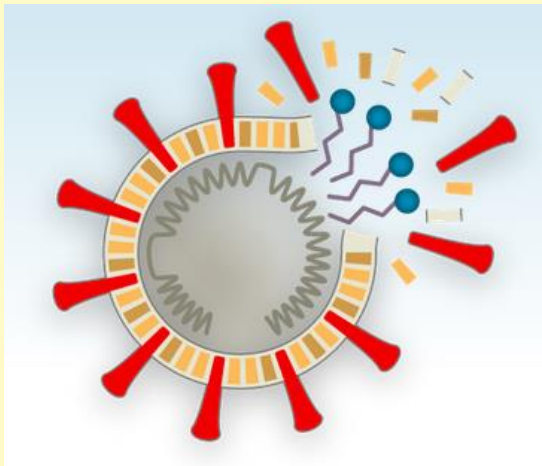
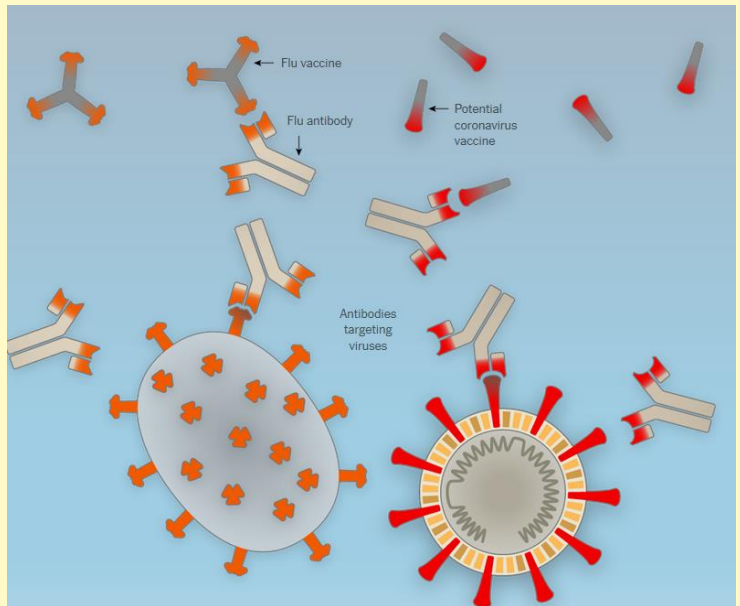
Leaving the Body

Coughing and sneezing can expel virus-laden droplets onto nearby people and surfaces, where the virus can remain infectious for several hours to several days. The C.D.C. recommends that people diagnosed with Covid-19 wear masks to [reduce the release of viruses](#). Health care workers and others who care for infected people too should wear masks.

COVID-19 Information (continued)

A Possible Vaccine

A future vaccine could help the body produce antibodies that target the SARS-CoV-2 virus and prevent it from infecting human cells. The flu vaccine works in a similar way, but antibodies generated from a flu vaccine do not protect against coronavirus.



How Soap Works

Soap [destroys the virus](#) when the water-shunning tails of the soap molecules wedge themselves into the lipid membrane and pry it apart. The best way to [avoid getting infected](#) with the coronavirus is to wash your hands with soap, avoid touching your face, keep your distance from sick people and regularly clean frequently used surfaces.

Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/03/11/science/how-coronavirus-hijacks-your-cells.html>

STAY HOME SAVE LIVES!

Anxiety management strategies

During these unusual times it is easy for anyone to feel anxious about life in general. Nothing seems to be the way it was and the future may seem unsettling. There are a range of strategies we can use to overcome these feeling of hopelessness. The following 10 steps were published by Beyond the Blue Organization which is easy to try.

1. **Slow breathing.** When you're anxious, your breathing becomes faster and shallower. Try deliberately slowing down your breathing. Count to three as you breathe in slowly – then count to three as you breathe out slowly.
2. **Progressive muscle relaxation.** Find a quiet location. Close your eyes and slowly tense and then relax each of your muscle groups from your toes to your head. Hold the tension for three seconds and then release quickly. This can help reduce the feelings of muscle tension that often comes with anxiety.
3. **Stay in the present moment.** Anxiety can make your thoughts live in a terrible future that hasn't happened yet. Try to bring yourself back to where you are. Practising meditation can help.
4. **Healthy lifestyle.** Keeping active, eating well, going out into nature, spending time with family and friends, reducing stress and doing the activities you enjoy are all effective in reducing anxiety and improving your wellbeing.
5. **Take small acts of bravery.** Avoiding what makes you anxious provides some relief in the short term, but can make you more anxious in the long term. Try approaching something that makes you anxious – even in a small way. The way through anxiety is by learning that what you fear isn't likely to happen – and if it does, you'll be able to cope with it.
6. **Challenge your self-talk.** How you think affects how you feel. Anxiety can make you overestimate the danger in a situation and underestimate your ability to handle it. Try to think of different interpretations to a situation that's making you anxious, rather than jumping to the worst-case scenario. Look at the facts for and against your thought being true.
7. **Plan worry time.** It's hard to stop worrying entirely so set aside some time to indulge your worries. Even 10 minutes each evening to write them down or go over them in your head can help stop your worries from taking over at other times.
8. **Get to know your anxiety.** Keep a diary of when it's at it's best – and worst. Find the patterns and plan your week – or day – to proactively manage your anxiety.
9. **Learn from others.** Talking with others who also experience anxiety – or are going through something similar – can help you feel less alone.
10. **Be kind to yourself.** Remember that you are not your anxiety. You are not weak. You are not inferior. You have a mental health condition. It's called anxiety.

However, remember, if your anxiety is proving difficult to manage [seek support from a professional](#).

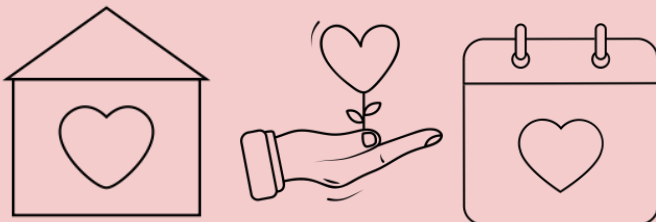
Source: <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/the-facts/anxiety/treatments-for-anxiety/anxiety-management-strategies>

CONGRATULATIONS!

MGCAANA would like to wish Mrs. Sujatha Werake and Dr. Mahinda Werake a wonderful Golden Anniversary! MGCAANA would like to take this opportunity to show our heartfelt gratitude to you both for the immense, unconditional love and services that you have rendered to MGCAANA since its inception. Thank you for being an amazing and caring friend, sister/brother, and mother/father figures to us all in many different ways. We love you and wish you both the very best.



Image courtesy: Geetha Eragoda



The vessel

by Nilmini Dorabawila

This body this vessel is an empty shell
We use to travel from birth to death
The being inside is what gives it life
And makes that vessel come alive

Waste not time to beautify the vessel
Instead use the time to shine
Make the rough diamond inside
A source of life and light alike

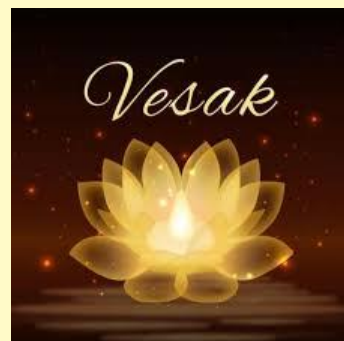
Spend your time within your soul
Make time to be with you alone
Find out what matters more to you
The vessel or the source that lies within

Look after the vessel you need it now
To journey through this road of life
When you reach the end you know
The vessel stays and off you go

Poetry Corner



mgcaana
wishes you
a peaceful Vesak!



Welithalapa Recipe

by Sureni Ranasinghe

Recipe Corner

Ingredients:

For the treacle

- ☐ 230g good quality jaggery
- ☐ 1 cup of water
- ☐ 3-4 pods of cardamom finely crushed

For the pittu

- ☐ 1 2/3 cups (250g) Rice flour
- ☐ 1 cup coconut (desiccated or fresh coconut)
- ☐ 3/4 cups + 2 tbsp water
- ☐ 1 tsp salt

To make treacle:

- ☐ Add jaggery and water to a saucepan in medium heat , keep stirring until jaggery is completely dissolved.
- ☐ After jaggery dissolves, take off from the cooker and set it aside.

To make the pittu:

- ☐ Add salt to water and give it a stir to dissolve it
- ☐ In a medium size mixing bowl mix rice flour well with shredded coconut
- ☐ Now add water little at time and mix with flour mixture, make sure not to add too much water. This is going to be similar to a pittu mixture but by adding a lesser amount of water.
- ☐ It is better to sprinkle water to form tiny flour balls like pittu, check the video to get an idea.
- ☐ (Due to the weather and moist of ingredients water amount needed can be more or less, so to prevent adding more water add little and increase the amount)
- ☐ Make sure to mix water well with flour while creating a crumbly texture and also to break bigger dough balls to smaller ones
- ☐ When the mixture is ready, steam it using a clean cloth or using a pittu maker if you have one.
- ☐ If you don't have a pittu maker (pittu bambuwa) transfer the mixture to a clean cloth, tie the cloth securing the flour mixture inside and steam it in a steamer for about 20 minutes. Make sure you wait till water boils and you can see the steam coming up before placing the flour mixture inside. Then close the lid tightly and steam it.
- ☐ After pittu is done break the bigger pieces in to small
- ☐ Heat up treacle for a min or two until its hot, then add crushed cardamoms to it and give it a stir
- ☐ Transfer the pittu mixture back to a bowl and start adding treacle, add little by little while mixing well.
- ☐ Add treacle until it becomes little sticky (dough consistency) where you can shape it
- ☐ When it's the right consistency transfer to a board and flatten it using a spatula
- ☐ Leave for about 30 minutes and cut into pieces & Enjoy!



Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rcWs5T1Neto>

2020 INTER-HOUSE SPORTS MEET



The inter-house sports meet of Mahamaya Girls' College, Kandy was held on February 27, 2020 at Trinity College cricket ground. The chief guest and the guest of honour were gracefully welcomed by the Greek maids of the four houses Maya, Sangamiththa, Yasodhara, and Prajapathi. Track and field events, cycling and walking events and the drill display presented by the school students and the majestic squad graced the event. The House Cup was won by Maya House.



2020 INTER-HOUSE SPORTS MEET (cont.)



Want to know what your Board of Directors (BOD) is up to?

Please read the minutes of the BOD's monthly meetings posted on MGCAANA website:

<http://www.mahamayaalumna.org/minutes.php>

If you have new ideas, concerns, or suggestions to improve how MGCAANA operates etc. please feel free to connect with the BOD through e-mail: Mahamaya_alumnae@yahoo.com

Renewing MGCAANA Membership for the year 2020-2021

Thank you to members that already renewed their membership for the year 2020-2021. If you have not renewed your membership yet, this is a friendly reminder to renew your membership to support MGCAANA's ongoing activities.

How you can renew your membership:

Online: Use your credit card or PayPal account to pay your membership fee through the [MGCAANA membership renewal page](#).

By Mail: Please mail a check payable to MGCAANA (\$ 15 - Students; \$ 25 - Regular).
Address: Treasurer, MGCAANA, 2417 NE 20th, Renton, WA 98056

Note: If you wish, you can also renew your membership for 3, 5, or 10 years by paying US\$70.00, US\$115.00 and US \$230.00 respectively.

Your generosity helps MGCAANA continue its legacy in helping Mayans and their communities in North America as well as current students at Mahamaya Girls' College, Kandy, Sri Lanka.

Newsletter Committee:

Vihara Dharmaratne, Vajeera Dorabawila, Lilika Molligoda, Berlini Narampanawe

Some Upcoming MGCAANA Activities

- Board Meetings (May)
- Virtual AGM (To be confirmed)
- Next Newsletter (June)