



GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
MINISTRY OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Media Release

NO PRICE-GOUGING PRACTISE PERSONAL HYGIENE

12 March, 2020:- In light of the declaration by the World Health Organisation (WHO) of the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) being officially deemed a pandemic on March 11th, 2020, the Consumer Affairs Division (CAD) has been notified that there has been a surge in panic buying among consumers. In this regard, the CAD encourages all citizens to be prepared, but avoid unnecessary panic-buying. Consumers, retailers and suppliers in the distributive network are critical to ensuring general stability in the economy. Whilst the CAD has always encouraged the practice of general bulk-buying, panic buying can be disruptive in light of the current pandemic.

The CAD is also aware that some businesses have taken this as an opportunity to capitalize on the vulnerabilities of the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. Businesses are implored to be fair in their pricing and to refrain from price gouging and other exploitative practices. Price gouging is a term referring to the increase in the prices of goods, services or commodities by a seller to a level much higher than is considered reasonable or fair. It is an unethical pricing strategy which compromises proper business policies and practices and ultimately takes advantage of the consumer. Consumers are encouraged to exercise their power of choice and comparative shopping in all situations and to withhold the purchase of any item that they believe to be unreasonably priced.

Supermarkets, Shopping Centres, Warehouse Clubs and other establishments are encouraged to ensure that proper hygiene is maintained through the strategic placement of hand sanitizers at areas where shopping carts and baskets are stationed. Consumers are encouraged to take personal responsibility and practise high hygiene standards. Prevention is the most important action you can take to protect yourself and your family



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from contracting the COVID-19. All citizens are asked to utilize the following personal hygiene guidelines and measures provided by the Ministry of Health:

- Wash your hands with Soap and Water.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Cover your nose and mouth with tissue when you cough and sneeze and dispose of the tissue immediately. Use the crook of your elbow if you do not have tissue.
- Avoid touching your face.
- Stay at home if you are ill.
- Avoid close contact with persons with flu-like symptoms.
- Thoroughly cook meat and eggs before consumption.

As always, the Consumer Affairs Division of the Ministry of Trade and Industry will continue to monitor prices. Consumers are free to call the Division at its toll free line at 800-4277 (4CPS), the CAD's Facebook page @ consumeraffairstt or email the Division at consumeraffairs@gov.tt, for any concerns or inquiries.

END
