Coronavirus-19 Disease (COVID-19) Patient Education Sheet

The 2019 Novel Coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) is a coronavirus identified as the cause of an outbreak of respiratory illness (Coronavirus Disease-19 or COVID-19) first detected in Wuhan, China. This virus was first identified in December 2019. This is a rapidly developing public health concern and infectious disease specialists are working hard to fully understand the nature of COVID-19.

**What are the symptoms?** Symptoms can include fever, cough, shortness of breath. The clinical spectrum of COVID-19 ranges from mild disease with non-specific signs and symptoms of acute respiratory illness, to severe pneumonia requiring intensive care. Most of the cases (80%) are mild to moderate. To date, older individuals and individuals with chronic medical conditions seem susceptible to more serious disease.

**What is the incubation period?** CDC believes at this time that symptoms of COVID-19 may appear in as few as 2 days or as long as 14 days after exposure.

**How does the virus spread?** The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person via respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby (within 6 feet) or possibly be inhaled into the lungs. The virus that causes COVID-19 is spreading very easily and sustainably between people.

**Does the virus spread from contact with infected surfaces or objects?** It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching their own mouth, nose or possibly their eyes, after touching infected surfaces or objects, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

**When does spread happen?** People are thought to be most contagious when they are most symptomatic. Some recent studies have suggested that COVID-19 may be spread by people who are not showing symptoms.

**What is the treatment?** Currently there are no FDA-approved medications to treat COVID-19. People infected with COVID-19 should receive supportive care to help relieve symptoms. For severe cases, treatment should include care to support vital organ functions. There is no post exposure prophylaxis (e.g. medication) for exposed individuals.

**What criteria help Health Care Providers identify persons with COVID-19?** Health Care Providers consider clinical features such as fever, cough, shortness of breath AND epidemiological risk including living in or travel to areas with widespread community transmission of COVID-19 and/or exposure to a person with symptomatic COVID-19 within 14 days of symptom onset. Additionally, a person with fever and severe acute lower respiratory illness without an explanatory diagnosis or risk factors may be tested for COVID-19. Presently, testing is primarily available through the Department of Public Health for
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individuals identified as a “person under investigation”, but efforts are underway to make testing more accessible.

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What preventative measures are helpful? There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to this virus. CDC recommends everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, including:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with 60-90% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

Additionally, during COVID-19 pandemic conditions: Stay home as much as possible and put distance between yourself and other people (keep about 6 feet between yourself and others). This is particularly important for older adults and people of any age with serious underlying medical conditions who might be at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

In general, when are the key times to wash hands?

- Before, during, and after preparing food
- Before eating food
- Before and after caring for someone at home who is sick
- Before and after treating a cut or wound
- After using the toilet
- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- After touching an animal, animal feed, or animal waste
- After handling pet food or pet treats
- After touching garbage

Does the CDC recommend the use of facemask in the community to prevent COVID-19? CDC recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g. grocery stores or pharmacies) especially in areas of significant community-based transmission.
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What should I do if I think I have been exposed to this virus? People who think they may have been exposed to SARS-CoV-2 should contact the Student Health Center or their healthcare provider by phone.

Where can I learn more? www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/

What if I have health questions or feel anxious and would like to speak with a professional? Students may contact the Student Health Center: 203-254-4000, Ext. 2241 or Counseling and Psychological Services: 203-254-4000, Ext. 2146

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