

## **COVID-19 Advice for Patients**

*Last Update: March 23, 2020*

The situation regarding COVID-19 is rapidly evolving. For the latest information, please check the CDC website (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/summary.html>).

### **Steps to take to protect yourself:**

- Stay home unless it is essential to go somewhere like the hospital or clinic to obtain supplies.
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. The alcohol content should be at least 60% if possible.
- Do not touch your face, especially eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. Discard the tissue and clean your hands. If a tissue is not available, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve.
- Wear a mask if possible and as instructed by your medical provider, especially in the hospital, clinic or elevators. You can make an effective cloth mask with a folded cloth if you do not have a manufactured mask. If wearing a mask, do not take the mask off unless instructed to do so by your health care provider in the examination room. Clean hands as instructed above before touching the mask or your face.
- Do not shake hands with others.
- Avoid direct contact with people who are sick.
- Maintain a distance of at least 6 feet between yourself and others. Avoid crowds and situations this distance cannot be maintained.
- Avoid buffets and eating areas where self-serve utensils are shared.
- Use public transportation only when essential and wash hands after using any public facility.
- Avoid touching high-touch surfaces in public places as far as possible (elevator buttons, door handles, handrails, etc). If you must touch something, use a tissue, glove, or sleeve to cover your hand or finger if possible. If you have no cover, clean your hands after touching such surface. Remember that gloves and tissues are potentially contaminated after they touch these surfaces.
- Clean your phone frequently with alcohol or disinfectant wipes.
- Clean surfaces at home that are touched frequently: tables, doorknobs, light switches, handles, desks, toilets, faucets, and sinks.
- After returning home from an outside visit, wash your clothes and take a shower with soap before settling down. Items that cannot be washed may be put in the clothes dryer to heat through and then set aside for 24 hours to decrease the risk of contamination.

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### **Symptoms of COVID-19**

Patients with COVID-19 typically have mild to severe respiratory illness.

Common symptoms include:

- Fever (this may be less prominent in immunocompromised patients, especially those on corticosteroids – dexamethasone, prednisone, methylprednisolone)
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

Symptoms typically appear within 2-14 days after exposure. Some people infected with the virus may be contagious even before they develop symptoms.

Call or send us a MyChart message if you have any of these symptoms. ***Please do not come to the clinic without a discussion first.***

### **Travel advice**

We recommend postponing or canceling all non-essential travel, not just to destinations with travel advisories by CDC (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>). This is not simply to avoid planes and trains. It is also to avoid getting sick in an area where you might not have an established relationship with the local health care system. Thus, long car journeys are also undesirable.