

3/17/2020

Dear WMC Patients,

We recognize there is a lot of media attention out there on the coronavirus (COVID-19). In this handout, we hope to answer some of your questions about the virus. We will do our best to stay up to date and be a resource for you as we learn more. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask your medical provider.

Sincerely, the Staff and Providers of WMC



<https://www.fda.gov/files/coronavirus-graphic-web-feature.jpg>

How do I stay healthy and prevent getting Coronavirus?

Should I buy/wear a mask?

Masks are recommended for 2 groups: those that are sick and those that work in close proximity to the sick such as health-care workers or emergency providers. Surgical masks do not filter out the virus. The CDC does NOT recommend masks for well people. Masks are recommended for those that are sick because they help reduce (but not eliminate) the spread when the person coughs. If you are well, a better strategy is to use social distancing. Keep 3-6 feet away from others. Work from home as much as possible.

Does hand washing help?

Yes. The virus is able to live outside the body for hours to days, so handwashing or the use of hand sanitizers (with at least 60% alcohol) helps. Hand-washing should be done for at least 20 seconds to be effective.

What is COVID-19/Coronavirus?

Is Coronavirus just a “bad flu”?

No, not exactly. There is much we don't know about this virus, but its symptoms are somewhat different from the seasonal flu. Influenza primarily affects the upper airway (e.g. sore throat, runny nose) and respiratory system, while COVID-19 also has cough, shortness of breath and a gastrointestinal component. COVID-19 has, so far, had a higher mortality rate, probably less than 2%, while seasonal flu has a mortality rate of 0.05-1%. Flu tends to target those at the extremes of age, the very young and the very old. The 1918 flu targeted young adults. COVID-19 seems to target older adults. So far, 94% of the deaths have been people over age 50. Fortunately, the large majority (80%) of cases are mild.

What surfaces present the greatest risk in terms of the virus' ability to survive?

The virus is spread by respiratory droplets so it depends on where they fall. You can pick it up from touching any surface or object the virus has landed on and then touching your mouth, nose or eyes. The virus can live for hours to days depending on the surface, temperature and humidity. Transmission is highest person-to-person from coughing and sneezing.

Is there a treatment?

No. There are no vaccines to prevent the illness and no specific medications to kill the virus. A vaccine is expected in a year at best. Remdesivir is an anti-viral medication that is currently being tested.

If you get the virus, can you get it again or does the body build immunity to it?

You are immune to this virus once infected. It is possible that the virus can mutate like the flu. If that happens, then you would not be immune, but this remains to be seen.

Prevention Continued...

Should I avoid people?

At this time, it is wise to keep a 3-6 foot distance from people. Work from home if possible and definitely stay home from work if you have symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath) or if you have been exposed. If you are older than 60 or have frequent contact with elderly people, you should avoid large gatherings where you have a greater risk of being exposed.

How much supplies do I need?

In basic disaster planning, it is good to prepare for being without community services and resources for at least 72 hours. While power outages are not likely with COVID-19, supply chains may be disrupted. It is recommended to have a 2-week supply of everything you need in case you need to limit your trips to the market or if the shelves are bare. Remember to make sure you have medications, pet supplies and food, batteries and household supplies like toilet paper, bleach cleansers, paper towels, feminine hygiene products etc. stocked in your house. While we can survive on water, baked beans and peanut butter, we may be miserable without those other items!

Should I cancel my travel plans?

We recommend that you avoid all discretionary domestic and international travel. The risk is two-fold, that of contracting the virus and also the possibility of being quarantined as the situation changes. This will be a moving target, so it is best to check in with the airline and the government websites such as www.cdc.gov before you travel.

Thank you to the WMC Patient Advisory Council for submitting their questions.

We are here to help you! Please visit our website, chat with us online, or call Westminster Medical Clinic at 303-428-7449

www.westminstermedicalclinic.com if you have any questions or concerns.

What should I do if I think I have COVID-19?

If you think you have the virus, do you need to have a test to confirm it or is it best to quarantine yourself as to not spread the virus? Since there is no cure for it, should people just stay home or should they come to the clinic?

The virus can no longer be contained so testing to find and isolate sources serves little purpose at this time. Testing is mostly done for hospitalized patients to confirm a diagnosis and treatment plan. We are not testing patients without symptoms. If you have been exposed to a person with known COVID-19 or have traveled abroad, you should self-isolate yourself for 14 days. If you develop symptoms such as fever, cough, and/or difficulty breathing, stay home and call your healthcare provider. Older patients and individuals who have severe underlying medical conditions or compromised immune systems should contact their healthcare provider early, even if their illness is mild. If you have severe symptoms, such as persistent pain or pressure in the chest, new confusion or inability to arouse, or bluish lips of face, seek care at the hospital immediately. If you have symptoms of COVID-19, you should self-isolate yourself for 10 days and contact WMC so we can discuss your symptoms with you.

If I am exposed to COVID-19 and infected, how long does it typically take for symptoms to manifest?

Symptoms appear from 2-14 days after exposure. Symptoms are generally mild in most people but 1 in 5 people will need to be hospitalized. Symptoms generally come on slow over 3-4 days but also may progress quickly in certain individuals. Severe symptoms usually begin 8-10 days after illness onset.

What is WMC doing?

Due to the circumstances, we have changed our hours starting March 30 through the end of May. We will be open 8am-5pm, Monday-Friday. We have implemented preventative measures to decrease risks to our patients and screening precautions to identify and isolate patients who may have the virus. We are keeping track of the most recent information from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Public Health Departments to guide our policies to keep you safe. At this time, we are open to see you for regular and sick appointments at Westminster Medical Clinic. We are also offering on-line TeleVisits "video visits" with your provider if you do not need to come into the clinic.

303.428.7449
www.westminstermedicalclinic.com