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## A DOCTOR'S CORONA PERSPECTIVE

Dear Beloved Patient,

Bay Area wants to share our perspectives with you regarding the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic. It is our hope that you and your loved ones remain healthy.

### How scared \*should\* you be of Coronavirus?

- \* Well, like all infections - Coronavirus does have the ability to harm us - although some 80% of people will have only mild symptoms. We should all be focusing on prevention.
- \* The virus tends to harm older people more than younger people. In fact, for children under 10 years old "severe" cases are rare.
- \* One key to understanding the spread of this virus is that people can infect others EVEN IF they have no symptoms themselves.

### How do I prevent catching Coronavirus ?

There are 5 basic protective measures against coronavirus include:

- 1. HANDS** Wash them often - for 20 seconds with soap and water. Or use hand sanitizer.
- 2. ELBOW** Cough into it (and not into your hand)
- 3. FACE** Don't touch it - often you have the virus on your hands and aren't aware. When you touch your face (eyes, nose and mouth especially) you can infect yourself.
- 4. FEET** Stay more than 6 feet apart - and **practice "Social Distancing"** (that is, avoid groups, especially if you are over 60 years old, or have chronic illnesses).
- 5. FEEL sick?** Stay home - you could spread this infection to many others. You may THINK you just have a cold, or a sinus infection - but it could be Corona.

## **What are typical Coronavirus symptoms?**

- 1) Fever
- 2) Cough
- 3) Shortness of breath
- 4) Fatigue
- 5) Sometimes it starts with diarrhea and other gastrointestinal symptoms.

## **What if you have symptoms and feel sick?**

- \* Then please - "self-quarantine" yourself for 2 weeks so you don't expose others.
- \* Even if you think it is "just a cold." Only see your doctor if you are significantly short of breath or sick - but not if you have only mild symptoms. Otherwise, you can spread the infection to many others.

## **How can I get tested?**

- \* **McClaren Macomb Hospital has a "Drive Through Screening Tent" set up**
  - A drive through screening tent will be set up outside of the ED and provide COVID-19 screening from 7am-7pm, staffed by the ED physicians and Nurses
  - Patients that require more assessment and or admission will be brought into the ED
- \* Currently we have heard they are only testing people who:
  - \* 1) Have tested negative for influenza and
  - \* 2) Traveled in the last 14 days to China, Japan, Italy, Iran or South Korea
  - \* OR
  - \* 3) Had direct exposure to a laboratory confirmed COVID-19 patient.

## **The question many people are asking, "Do you think I could die from Coronavirus?"**

- \* Let's put that question in perspective. There are 327.2 million people in the USA (data from 2018). The CDC projects their "worst case" scenario of death due to Coronavirus anywhere from 200,000 to 1.7 million.
- \* That means in the very worst projection your chance of dying is 1 in 200 (overall).
- \* But, we know that this virus strikes the old and infirm - so if you are older than 60 and especially when you are older than 70 you are at higher risk of a severe infection, or death. Initial data from China's CDC stated the death rate from Covid-19 (Coronavirus) was 2.3% overall.
- \* However, these percentages (just as those in the USA) are likely MUCH higher because many people who had the virus never sought treatment. Also, initially testing wasn't available. Many people didn't even know they had the infection.

## **Who is more likely to die from Coronavirus infections?**

- \* The older you are, the greater chance you have of getting seriously ill from Coronavirus - especially if you are 70 years old and older.
- \* You are also at a higher risk if you have diseases like diabetes, lung disease, if you smoke, have asthma, if you are morbidly obese, are on dialysis, have significant heart disease, etc - the death rate increases.

## **Do I have Coronavirus or a cold?**

We can't ever know for sure. Whether in Wuhan China, Italy, or the USA - scores of people likely caught the virus and either didn't know they even had it, or had such minor symptoms, they thought it was "just a cold." They never did see a doctor or emergency room...they just suffered in silence - just as we would likely do if we had minor cold symptoms.

### **Obtain up to the minute information:**

- Ascension Coronavirus Hotline: 833-981-0738
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/>
- Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) Coronavirus hotline: 888-535-6136. Open seven days a week 8 am-5pm.
- MDHHS website: <https://www.michigan.gov/coronavirus> provides daily updates

### **So our conclusion is:**

First - please be careful. For the next several weeks try to avoid gathering in crowds. If you go out, wash your hands, hand sanitize, and don't touch your face. Above all - if you feel sick at all - GET IN BED AND REST - drink lots of fluids, use Tylenol to lower temperatures if feverish.

Respect the illness and give your immune system a chance to fight.

Exercising when you are sick does NOT "burn out bugs!" Exercise can impair your immune system's ability to fight - so stay in bed.

And above all we at Bay Area are praying for all of your health and well-being.

Sincerely,

Bay Area Family Physicians