

## Coronavirus (COVID-19) Information Update for Ravenswood Family Health Network

Last updated March 27<sup>th</sup> 2020

### What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is the name of the disease that is caused by Sars-Cov-2 also known as Novel coronavirus or COVID-19 virus or “coronavirus”. It is a new virus strain that originated in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China and that has now spread globally since December 2019.

**Sars-Cov-2 (severe acute respiratory-CoronaVirus-2)** is the name of the virus that is commonly being referred to as “coronavirus.” There are already six coronaviruses that we are aware of:

- Four are responsible for the common cold a mild respiratory illness, that occurs every year.
- Two coronaviruses have caused more severe illness, such as severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS).

Since the virus was new, we did not know if COVID-19 would cause mild respiratory symptoms or more severe symptoms, which is why many countries developed significant efforts to contain the virus. It has now spread worldwide and the WHO (World Health Organization) has declared a pandemic. It is in the US and is now spreading at the community level. Fortunately, we now know more about this virus and national, state and local organizations are coordinating efforts to help control it. We must approach it as group effort and we need your help too – by spreading appropriate and factual information, you can help to control the spread of the virus. Please share [these resources](#) with family, friends, neighbors and anyone else you normally interact with to have them practice the below precautions.

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

If you or a loved one is experiencing severe symptoms such as trouble breathing or fingers and lips turning blue, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department. Emergency departments are requesting that patients call ahead as much as possible so that they can be prepared for possible COVID-19 cases.

For the protection of our staff and other patients, we ask anyone with mild or moderate symptoms concerned about COVID-19 infection to not come to the clinic, but instead to call. We will have a nurse speak with you to address your concerns. There is currently no specific treatment for COVID-19. The nurse can provide you with information on home care instructions that you can do to help alleviate your symptoms. If you have symptoms or are concerned

about being sick, please help us to protect yourself, other patients and our staff by staying at home and calling us to address your concerns over the phone.

### **How can I protect myself?**

The best thing you can do to protect yourself against coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is to avoid exposure. Here are some strategies from the CDC on how to do that:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick. If possible, try to stay 6 feet away.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- 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 using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Follow CDC's recommendations for using a facemask.
  - CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19.
  - Facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of the disease to others. The use of facemasks is also crucial for health workers and people who are taking care of someone in close settings (at home or in a health care facility).
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
  - If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.
  - see: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/disinfecting-your-home.html>

If you will be visiting the clinic for a scheduled appointment, please do not bring anyone else with you. If you do need someone to help you with your office visit, bring someone who is well without cold and flu symptoms. You can only bring one person to limit spread at the clinic. If you need any other accommodations let us know prior to your visit.

There is currently no medications (antivirals) to treat nor vaccine available to prevent COVID-19 infection. Most cases of COVID-19 infection will be mild and will not require medical attention. For more information, see the [CDC website](#).

### **Can I get a test for COVID-19?**

Due to broad community spread and still limited availability of test kits, we are unable to test everyone with symptoms. Fortunately, not everyone who gets cough and respiratory symptoms will need to be tested for COVID19. Ravenswood FHC has a limited quantity of tests

at this time that we must reserve for high risk individuals (such as those >60 years old, immunocompromised, or with serious chronic medical conditions) with specific symptoms.

Testing is done by appointment only and must be ordered in advance by a Ravenswood provider. If you believe you need to be tested for COVID19, you must call to be triaged by a nurse and then if appropriate be scheduled for a telephone visit with a Ravenswood provider.

### Other Frequently Asked Questions

- **Can I be tested if I do not have symptoms?** People without symptoms are NOT eligible for testing
- **I have symptoms and my boss wants to know when I'll be able to return to work. What should I tell them?** Advice regarding when to return to work is constantly changing. At this time, we recommend that anyone with a cough, fever, or shortness of breath contact the clinic to determine need for further evaluation. In the meanwhile, **please stay at home, do not go to work, and do not go out in public.** Ravenswood Family Health Network has prepared a letter you can print and provide to your employer on further instructions on when to return to work. The letter can be found [here](#).
- **What resources are available for me if I cannot work due to COVID19 or if I have to take care of my children because of school closures?** The California Employment Development Department (EDD) has [special guidance](#) on unemployment claims during this time. A healthcare professional's certification is NOT required to file an EDD claim unless you are filing for disability related to known COVID-19 illness. Additional guidance can be found at <https://covid19.ca.gov/get-financial-help/#top>.
- **Without my paycheck, I can't afford to buy food or pay rent. What resources are available?** Ravenswood staff have compiled a list of resources for food and financial assistance available locally. You can access it [here](#). You can also check your city's website or community groups that you may belong to.
- **How important is the shelter-in-place order also known as stay at home?** Following the shelter-in-place order is **critical** to slowing the spread of the virus and protecting our community. If you do not work for a business that provides [essential services](#), please stay at home, leaving only to obtain food and essential supplies. For more information on COVID-19 and California's shelter-in-place orders, visit <https://covid19.ca.gov/>
- **Will I die if I get COVID-19?** The majority of patients who get sick with COVID-19 will have very mild illness and will not need to see a medical provider or go to the hospital. The best thing you can do to keep yourself and your family safe from illness in general is

to respect the shelter in place order, wash your hands, and make sure you and your family are up to date on routine vaccines, such as your flu and pneumonia shots.

- **My child's school was affected by COVID-19. What should I do?** In addition to the above prevention steps, see the [CDC's information guide regarding COVID-19 in children.](#)
- **Can I get COVID-19 from packages delivered from China or other countries?** No. Coronaviruses do not survive long on objects such as letters and packages. For more on common myths related to COVID-19, check out the WHO website.
- **Can I get infections from touching surfaces or objects such as doorknobs?** Yes. For more information on how the virus spreads and how to protect yourself, see: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/transmission.html>