

CORONAVIRUS UPDATE FROM NC NEPHROLOGY

Dear Patient:

As you are all aware, the world is facing a widespread outbreak of a disease known as COVID-19 which is caused by a novel Coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2). At NC Nephrology, we strive to provide you with the safest environment possible. To that end, our physicians and staff would like to update you regarding the extra precautions we are taking and to provide you information that you should know about the disease.

If you have mild cold or flu-like symptoms, we encourage you to stay home. Most people can treat their symptoms at home with rest and use of over the counter medication for treatment of fevers, body aches, cough and congestion. We also encourage you to stay away from others so that they don't get sick too. If you are experiencing severe symptoms, please call your primary care physician's office.

If you think you may have come into contact with someone who has traveled to one of the countries with a widespread outbreak – **China (including Hong Kong and Macau), Iran, South Korea, Italy, and Japan – or someone who was diagnosed with COVID-19**, and you have respiratory symptoms such as cough or difficulty breathing or fever, please call your primary care physician's office. You may be directed to call your local health department for further guidance. Before going to a health care provider, clinic, hospital or emergency room, call ahead to describe your symptoms and how you may have been exposed to the virus. In the event of an emergency call 911. **If you are experiencing cold like symptoms, please call the office first. Do not just show up.**

If you are experiencing life threatening conditions like severe shortness of breath, dehydration or other complications, do not hesitate to call 911.

The vast majority of COVID-19 cases produce mild to moderate illness and do not require hospitalization. Often times, people can recover at home. The steps to protect yourself from COVID-19 are generally the same as those for the flu:

- We encourage everyone to practice excellent hand hygiene - washing frequently throughout the day with soap and water (for at least 20 seconds). When soap and water is not practical, alcohol-containing hand sanitizer (60% alcohol) is an acceptable substitute.
- Avoid close contact with sick people.
- Cough/sneeze into a tissue or your sleeve or elbow to reduce the spread of infection.
- Avoid touching your face (eyes, nose, and mouth).

The Centers for Disease Control does NOT recommend that people who are well wear a face mask to protect themselves from the flu, COVID-19 or other respiratory illnesses. Face masks should ONLY be used by people who show symptoms of these diseases to help prevent spread of the disease to others. Common sense is important: if you feel ill, even mildly ill, limit your exposure to others. Don't go to work sick. Treat your symptoms at home and call your primary care physician with questions. A mild illness in one person could be passed along to another and cause a life threatening one. If you have previously scheduled a follow up appointment, physical, or tests with a health care provider— and are ill, please reschedule. Lastly, this situation is very fluid and there is still much that we don't know about this disease. Please pay attention to the public health authorities, and we at NC Nephrology will also continue to update you.

Respectfully,

NC Nephrology Physicians
877-626-6269