

With growing concerns regarding the spread of Corona virus COVID- 19 in our community, we wanted to reach out to you to discuss what you can do to help protect yourself, your family and to prevent the spread of the virus. First and foremost, we are here to help you! At Barnard Family Health Centers, you are a part of our family, and we hope to guide you during this process. Please feel free to contact our office with questions or concerns in order for us to help you seek the most appropriate care.

As of March 12, 2020, we are most concerned for patients that have travelled to locations where the virus is more active. However, we anticipate there being more community spread in the very near future. We advise that people in the highest risk categories take extra precautions to protect themselves. Those in the highest risk groups include people over the age of 65, those with lung and heart diseases, and people who are immune-compromised.

The best ways to prevent the spread of the virus are to follow basic hygiene practices. Try not to panic! Please remember to wash your hands regularly. Spend about 20-30 seconds scrubbing your hands with soap before rinsing. Try not to touch your mouth, nose or eyes as these are points of entry for the virus. Avoid close contact with someone who is sick – close contact is defined as within 6 feet for 3 minutes or more.

Our government, local health departments and businesses are trying to mitigate the spread of the disease by advising people to avoid unnecessary travel and limiting exposure by avoiding large group gatherings. Please keep in mind that while we are expecting most patients to have a mild illness, we can help to protect those more at risk by staying home when sick and avoiding big groups.

As various countries around the world have responded differently to the severity of the illness, anticipate some changes to your daily life. Some employers may be advising people to work from home. Currently, we are not recommending quarantining yourself unless you have been in contact with a known case of Corona virus or if you have travelled to a known area with high levels of Corona virus within the past 2 weeks. Routine screening is also not recommended; testing is ongoing for patients who have symptoms (high fever, shortness of breath and cough) and meet travel or contact criteria set by the CDC.

Please contact our office if you are showing symptoms, and we will help to direct you regarding the next steps for evaluation and treatment. One of the best ways for us to get your messages quickly is by using your Portal/Healow App. We are also hoping to prevent inundation of our local hospitals for mild illnesses to make sure people who are severely ill can get the care they need.

The best source of information as things continue to develop will be the CDC and your local health department. Things to keep in mind include making sure you have at least a 30 day supply of medications and are prepared for a long stay at home (about 14 days) if a quarantine is implemented. Continue routine health practices including staying hydrated, sleeping well and eating a balanced diet to keep your immune system healthy.

We continue to strive to give you the best care possible and appreciate you working with us during this evolving health crisis.

Sincerely,

The Doctors, Physician Assistants, and staff at Barnard Family Health Centers