

Novel Coronavirus Talking Points for Physician Practices March 10, 2020

What is novel coronavirus?(also referred to as COVID-19)

- Novel coronavirus is a virus strain that has only spread in people since December 2019. Health experts are concerned because little is known about this new virus and it has the potential to cause severe illness and pneumonia in some people.

What are the symptoms?

- Symptoms include fever, coughing and aches, difficulty breathing.
- People who have been diagnosed with novel coronavirus have reported symptoms that may appear in as few as 2 days or as long as 14 days after exposure to the virus.

What is the risk to catching it?

- Currently the risk to the general public is low. At this time, there are a small number of individual cases in the U.S.
- The goal of the ongoing U.S. public health response is to contain this outbreak and prevent sustained spread of novel coronavirus in this country.

How can I protect myself from getting novel coronavirus?

- Steps you can take to prevent spread of flu and the common cold will also help prevent coronavirus:
 - **Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.**
 - **Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.**
 - **Avoid contact with people who are sick.**
 - **Stay home while you are sick and avoid close contact with others.**
 - **Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing.**
- Currently, there are no vaccines available to prevent novel coronavirus infections.

How is novel coronavirus treated?

- There are no medications specifically approved for novel coronavirus.
- Most people with mild novel coronavirus illness will recover on their own by drinking plenty of fluids, resting, and taking pain and fever medications.
- However, some people develop pneumonia and require medical care or hospitalization.

What should I do to screen patients for coronavirus?

- Any patients who present with flu-like symptoms should be asked to wear a surgical mask.
- To help determine if a patient is at risk for coronavirus, ask the following questions:
 - **Have you traveled to China, Italy, Iran, Japan or South Korea in the past four weeks, or have you been exposed to a confirmed or suspected case of coronavirus?**
 - **Do you have any of the following symptoms: fever, cough, aches, shortness of breath?**
- If a patient answers yes to these questions, begin contact/airborne precautions.