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We care deeply about you and your wellbeing and have been working diligently to catch up to speed with the data that is being generated regarding current Coronavirus. Our goal is to serve each of you in this time of need for medical education, care and support. This information is a bit lengthy, but please read it all so that you know your options in the coming days. With this in mind, here is the latest information:

We will be continuing to see patients in the office in Marble Falls with the following potential changes:

We may contact you before your scheduled visits to make sure that having you come to the office is still the best option. All patients will be offered phone visits instead of in-office visits if that is more comfortable and suitable to that patient's circumstances. We will be asking the following questions:

- do you have a fever?
- do you have a dry cough?
- do you have a sore throat?
- do you feel that you have a flu-like illness right now?
- have you traveled to China or Europe in the past 3 weeks?
- have you been around anyone who has tested positive for coronavirus?

If the answer to all of these is NO, you can be seen in the office as usual, or you can still be offered a phone appointment. If you do not want to leave home, you can still do a follow up OR new patient appointment via phone. Texas has lifted the restriction for seeing people in person for the first time to create a physician-patient relationship and is now allowing all types of visits, new and established, to be telemedicine style, if preferred.

What Is Coronavirus?

Coronavirus is a virus that primarily affects the respiratory system. While there are around a dozen different types of coronaviruses, only three are able to infect humans. Our current health threat is a strain of coronavirus officially known as SARS-COV-2 and causes a disease which has been dubbed Covid-19. It's thought to be an airborne virus – meaning it's spread from person to person through respiratory droplets produced when someone coughs or sneezes. These droplets can end up on a surface (like your hands or a doorknob) and then be spread if you come into contact with the contaminated surface. Once the coronavirus is contracted, symptoms can range from mild to life-threatening.

What Are the Symptoms of Coronavirus?

The coronavirus can remain latent for anywhere from two to 14 days – meaning people can be infected without showing any symptoms. The main symptoms of coronavirus are:
Sore Throat – lasting 3 to 4 days

Fever

Cough

Shortness of breath – if you feel like you are drowning, it's imperative that you seek immediate attention

But those infected may experience additional symptoms including:

Headache

Muscular stiffness and pain

Loss of appetite

Malaise, extreme generalised fatigue

Chills

Confusion

Dizziness

Rash

Night sweats

Stomach upset, such as nausea or diarrhea

The symptoms of coronavirus are quite similar to the flu – adding to the hysteria as flu season has been in full swing.

If you are concerned about having symptoms of COVID19 and / or having possibly been exposed, this is what we want you to consider:

First, don't panic. We will help you formulate an appropriate approach to this situation. If you have a runny nose and sputum, you have a common cold. Coronavirus pneumonia is a dry cough with no runny nose.

Then, we will need to know the answers to these questions:

1. Have you traveled to / from China, Europe, or major U.S. metropolitan areas where the coronavirus has been reported to be spreading in the past 3 weeks? Y or N
2. Have you been exposed to someone who has been diagnosed or tested positive for the coronavirus? Y or N
3. Do you currently have fever? Y or N
4. Do you currently have a dry cough? Y or N
5. Do you have a sore throat? Y or N
5. Do you have severe nasal congestion? Y or N
6. Do you feel short of breath? Y or N

Is the Coronavirus Deadly?

Currently, the coronavirus is estimated to have at most a two to three percent fatality rate. And while that might sound scary at first glance, it's important to put those numbers into perspective. At the time of this article, a little over 2,500 people have died from coronavirus. Compare that to an estimated 291,000 to 646,000 people that die from the seasonal flu every year across the globe. Even if the deaths from coronavirus increased by a hundredfold, the number of deaths would only be approaching the lower limits of the estimated death toll caused by existing strains of the flu virus. So in short, yes, the coronavirus can be deadly. But the vast majority of individuals who contract coronavirus have mild symptoms that resolve without complication. Some have no symptoms at all, which is why people are often walking around or traveling and spreading the virus without even knowing they are infected. And those most at risk of death have other pre-existing conditions that leave their immune or respiratory system compromised. Those at risk are patients with uncontrolled diabetes, heart disease, COPD or emphysema, the elderly or immune-compromised. Let's take a deeper look at exactly how the coronavirus affects the body so you can have a better understanding of how to protect yourself.

How Exactly Does the Coronavirus Affect the Body?

The "SARS" in the coronaviruses' official name "SARS-COV-2" stands for "Sudden Acute Respiratory Syndrome" because it can cause a sudden onset of respiratory failure. Coronavirus can lead to respiratory failure by causing:

Damage to the membrane where gas is exchanged in your lungs (the alveolar-capillary barrier)

Oxidative injury

An uncontrolled inflammation from excessive production of cytokines

If your body becomes infected, the virus attaches to the surface of epithelial cells in the lungs, spleen, and lymphatic system. Once your body is alerted to the invaders, your immune system goes to work and deploys immune cells and sets off a cascade of chemical messengers, causing what is known as a "cytokine storm." Cytokines are a type of chemical messenger the immune system uses to communicate with the rest of the body. This flooding of cytokines and immune cells into the tissues of the respiratory tract is what causes damage to the alveolar-capillary barrier, oxidative injury, and uncontrolled inflammation. This combination essentially halts the lung cell's ability to move mucus out of the lungs and triggers the immune system to begin attacking your own lung cells. In susceptible individuals whose immune or respiratory systems are compromised, this can result in a severe lack of oxygen in the body, which eventually leads to death. Fortunately, your chances of dying from coronavirus are pretty slim. But there are some simple steps you can and should take to protect yourself from coronavirus.

How Can You Protect Yourself From Coronavirus?

When it comes to defending yourself against coronavirus, it's best to take a two-pronged approach: avoiding potential contact with the virus and bolstering your natural ability to fight infection. Here's what we recommend:

Take Precautions

The most effective way to prevent the spread of germs is pretty straightforward. Simply taking some basic precautions to keep viruses and bacteria from entering your body can go a long way in keeping you safe.

Wash your hands frequently with soap and warm water – scrubbing all surfaces of your hands for at least 20 seconds. And don't forget under the fingernails!

Use an alcohol-based hand non-toxic sanitizer to clean your hands if soap and water aren't available. And only if your hands aren't visibly soiled. Always choose soap and water if available over hand sanitizer.

Always wash your hands before eating or touching your face.

Get outside. The virus is not heat-resistant and will be killed by temperature of just 80+ degrees. It hates the sun.

Drink warm water. This is effective for all viruses. Try not to drink liquids with ice.

Gargle as a prevention. A simple solution of salt in warm water will suffice.

Drink plenty of water!

Regularly clean and disinfect any frequently touched objects or surfaces with cleaning sprays or wipes.

Stay home if you're sick or feeling under the weather.

Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

These tips may sound simple, but they're powerful, and just doing these things will go a long way. I suggest incorporating these healthy habits into your daily routines – coronavirus or not.

Keep Your Immune System in Top Shape

Coming into contact with some germs is unavoidable. But keeping your immune system in tip-top shape is your best defense against any microorganisms that might make their way to your body.

To keep your immune system running at full force, here's what I recommend:

Get plenty of restful sleep. Your immune system requires large amounts of energy, so it depends on adequate sleep to function at full capacity. Aim for a minimum of 7-8 hours of quality restful sleep each night, preferably at least 90 minutes of both deep sleep and REM.

Reduce stress. Emotional stress not only increases inflammation, but it also puts a damper on your immune system – meaning double trouble when it comes to your body’s ability to fight off invaders. Taking steps to minimize stress and finding healthy ways to process the unavoidable stress (like **practicing meditation**) can go a long way in keeping your immune system healthy.

Give your gut some love. Your gut health and your immune system are intricately linked, so keeping your digestive tract happy will, in turn, keep your immune system up and running. Make sure you’re eating a healthy well-rounded diet based on real foods, going to the bathroom regularly to eliminate toxins, and healing any issues you may have like **leaky gut syndrome**.

A holistic approach to health, wellness, and disease prevention is the most effective. So be sure to address all these aspects of your health.

Give Your Body a Boost

Supplements are one of the most potent ways to give your body a boost and drastically improve its ability to fight off infection. Here are some of the most powerful immune-boosting supplements that I recommend taking:

Argentyn 23 or Sovereign Silver: spray in nose and throat multiple times each day, especially after being around people. These can also be a nebulizer – place approximately 1 to 1 ½ teaspoons (do not mix with any other solution or dilute) in the nebulizer chamber and nebulize for approximately 10 minutes up to 3 times a day.

Oral Vitamin C: Take a minimum of 1,000 mg 3 times a day and more is better. If bowels get loose, you have consumed enough.

Vitamin D3: Vitamin D plays a crucial role in modulating immune system function and a deficiency can put a damper on your ability to fight off infection.

IV Support: Medical IV vitamin C and medical IV ozone therapies are anti-microbial and have shown to improve immune function and immune resilience. We will remain open to giving these to anyone who wishes to have this type of therapy. We will provide private rooms for anyone with active/acute symptoms in order to protect those who enter our office. We will also be taking extensive extra measures with more frequent cleaning of surfaces touched by patients and staff in our office space.

What Is the Treatment for Coronavirus?

Currently, there is no one standard treatment for coronavirus. As of now, those infected with coronavirus are being quarantined to prevent further spread while being provided with supportive measures, such as oxygen therapy. For those for whom coronavirus symptoms appear to have started and are at risk for the more serious symptoms of the disease, Dr. Offutt has put together a regimen of therapies that involves

taking 2 interventions together, one of which requires a prescription, based on some of the data coming from Taiwan where they have been treating patients for longer than we have here in the United States.

In order to facilitate the conversation to decide whether or not this therapy is appropriate, each patient will discuss with Dr. Offutt or Tavie Peters, FNP, using a phone visit so that the risks / benefits / alternatives for this regimen can be carefully considered. This is NOT a preventative treatment regimen, but rather, a treatment regimen to be given if the virus is suspected to be causing an acute infection. IV therapies may also be recommended depending upon the patient's individual health risk.

If you are ill and come to our office for IV therapy, please enter through the back door, wear a mask if you have one, and be prepared to be escorted to a private space in the building.

So, How Concerned Should
You Really Be?

Just like nearly all contagious illnesses, coronavirus should be taken seriously.

We are praying that this virus runs its course in a way that reminds us all to look out for each other. As long as our ICU and hospital facilities can manage the numbers of patients who may become seriously ill, the rest of the population will recover and resume our usual lifestyles. From my point of view as a physician, the main concern is avoiding this medical facility overload as that is what will result in the greatest community challenges for all of us. I invite you to pray, too, for this to be something from which each of us takes gratitude for our health, our modern conveniences, our communities, and our countless privileges.

May God bless each of you with peace and health,

Amy Offutt, M.D. and staff