COVID-19 FAQ*
*Information as of 3.24.20

GW Hospital Specific Questions

Preparedness and Process

- **What is GW Hospital doing to prepare?**
  We are working closely and regularly with our partners at UHS, GW University and the GW Medical Faculty Associates to be proactive to this current outbreak. We are following guidelines from CDC, WHO and D.C. Department of Health including:
  - Early identification of suspected patients
  - Appropriate isolation of such patients – droplet and airborne
  - Use of the CDC recommended PPE
  - Patient testing under CDC and DC Health guidance
  - Safe disposition of such patients, to either inpatient admission to a proper setting or discharge

  We have activated our incident command structure to monitor the situation closely for immediate response and action during this evolving situation, including, but not limited to the following in response to this national emergency:
  - Proactively screening patients for scheduled elective procedures and treatments
  - Surge capacity planning
  - Expanding treatment spaces
  - Visitation restrictions

- **What are the visitor restrictions?**
  The George Washington University Hospital is temporarily restricting all visitors, as of March 13, 2020. Exceptions to these restrictions can be made in special circumstances, and by the Incident Commander, including:
  - End of Life Care,
  - The guardian of a pediatric/neonatal patient,
  - Labor and delivery – one visitor (this includes either the professional support person or one loved one). Visitor must remain in the hospital for duration of stay.

  To seek approval, call 202-715-4195.

  For all exceptions approved, individuals are subject to screening and will be prohibited if they have been in contact with someone with fever, cough or influenza-like symptoms within the last 48 hours; a known or suspected COVID-19 patient; and/or have traveled to an affected country, as currently identified on the CDC Travel Health Notices list. Additionally, individuals
will be required to practice effective hand hygiene upon entering the facility as well as entering and exiting a patient room.

- **Can I still walk through the ED? How should I enter and exit the hospital?**
The ED entrance should be used for those seeking medical care only. Employees should not be entering or exiting the hospital through the ED. Rather, all employees should enter and exit through the main lobby doors. We will have security available after hours to assist employees in and out of the hospital main lobby entrance. You can contact security at x5000 after 10 p.m. and before 5:30 a.m. to exit and enter the main lobby for hospital business.

- **What do I do if I feel sick outside of work?**
  If you have symptoms of illness including a respiratory infection or another infection with fever, call your supervisor and do not report to work.

  Illness unrelated to work-related exposure should be handled as follows. Stay home and contact your healthcare provider. If you do not have a primary care physician, you can visit one of the GW Immediate and Primary Care locations in Cleveland Park, McPherson Square and Rhode Island Avenue:
  - **Cleveland Park**
    2902 Porter Street, NW
    Washington, DC 20008
    202-525-5287
  - **McPherson Square**
    1101 15th St NW
    Washington, DC 20005
    202-798-0100
  - **Rhode Island Ave**
    2350 Washington Pl., NE
    Suite 110N
    Washington, DC 20018
    202-544-7580

- **What happens if a patient comes to the ED and is suspected of COVID-19?**
  We will screen the patient using CDC guidelines and make a recommendation whether to test. If the patient has mild symptoms, we will discharge them to self-isolate at home until the test results are returned. If the patient is acutely ill, we will admit the patient and treat them as though they are positive until test results are returned, while maintaining all appropriate precautions for staff and other patients.

- **Are we able to test at GW Hospital?**

Date and Time: 3.24.20 – 12:35 p.m.
Yes, we have commercial testing capability at GW Hospital and physicians are able to place an order for a test.

- **What will happen if I interact with a COVID-19 positive patient?**
  In the event GW Hospital has a COVID-19 positive patient, we will work with our partners at the CDC and D.C. Department of Health to trace any individuals who may have cared for the patient through the medical record and other tools at our disposal. Those individuals will be notified. If those who cared for the individual had on proper PPE, no further action is needed. If they did not then per CDC guidelines, they will be asked to self-isolate for 14 days.

- **If I interact with a patient who later tests positive, will I be notified?**
  Yes, we will notify any staff who have interacted with a patient who has tested positive for COVID-19.

- **What do I do if I am exposed at work?**
  We have developed HIPAA-compliant resources for tracking symptoms and monitoring your ongoing health situation. It is both a hospital and regulatory requirement that you complete the tools that have been provided to you.

  If you are sick or believe you have been exposed to COVID-19, you must:
  1) Call your manager and tell them you are sick
  2) Complete the COVID-19 Self-Monitoring tool - your manager will send you a link to the tool.
  3) Contact Sedgwick at 1-877-219-7732
  4) Call Infection Prevention at 202-715-4448 to report your symptoms
  5) Continue to update the COVID-19 self-monitoring tool twice a day - every 12 hours, you will record your temperature and enter the information in the tool.

  The COVID-19 Self-Monitoring tool is most easily accessible on your smart phone.

  Residents should follow a different process. Both of these processes are posted to the intranet COVID-19 page.

- **If an outpatient area suspects that a patient has COVID-19, how should we proceed?**
  If you suspect a case of COVID-19, please direct them to our ED. As is standard process when directing a patient to the ED from an outpatient location, please call the ED ahead of time. Notify them of symptoms and potential COVID-19 infection.

- **If a patient is in a hospital room and tests positive, how is the room cleaned?**
  We have an established process for terminally cleaning rooms that we use with highly infectious diseases such as TB and meningitis. We will follow that process in the event we have a positive COVID-19 patient.
What if I have exposure outside of work to someone who tested positive?
Individuals should self-quarantine for 14 days, do not report to work and contact their manager in any of the following situations:
  - Employees expected to return from travel to level 3 countries, i.e., any country in Europe, Iran, Italy, China, or South Korea
  - Employees who are on self-quarantine due to family/co-habitant
  - Employees who are on self-quarantine for other reasons, i.e., community other reason

What if I have secondary exposure to someone who tested positive?
Secondary exposure occurs when you have been exposed to someone who has been exposed to someone with COVID-19. CDC guidelines do not require any additional precautions or changes for the individual with secondary exposure. You do not need to report or self-quarantine unless you are directly exposed to someone with COVID-19 or become ill with a fever or cough.

What do I do if an employee calls out unrelated to COVID-19?
Managers from departments other than inpatient nursing, are required to report the number of call-outs which are unrelated to COVID-19 to their HR partner. If an employee calls out under ASSLA due to illness, the manager can screen for symptoms.

Travel

What are the travel restrictions?
The CDC recommends that travelers avoid all non-essential travel to Level 3 countries. Check with the CDC website before making travel plans. Here is a link to that website: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html

What if I travel to a highly infected area?
Countries considered to be Level 3 risk by the CDC include:
  - China
  - South Korea
  - Iran
  - Italy
  - Most of Europe

If you travel to one of these countries or any locations that CDC adds to Level 3, you must notify your manager. You will be asked to self-isolate for 14 days before returning to work, per CDC guidelines. In addition, we will require you to be examined by your physician and provide documentation before returning to work. Please check the CDC website for up-to-date travel information: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html.

PPE
• **Does GW Hospital have enough PPE?**

While GW Hospital has sufficient supplies, we must ensure that we are adequately using these resources. As such, we have secured our masks to ensure they are available to the staff who need them to provide clinical care.

• **Should I be fitted for an N95 mask?**

If you are providing patient care, you should be fitted. You can get fitted Monday – Friday in Employee Health.

• **How do I properly use surgical, procedural and N95 masks?**

  o Remove the mask when no longer in clinical space and the patient intervention is complete
  o For ear loop mask, remove the mask from the side with your head tilted forward. For tied masks, remove by handling only the ties, and untie the bottom tie followed by the top tie
  o Properly dispose of mask by touching only the ear loops or the ties. Perform HH before and after removing a surgical mask or any type of PPE
  o Use mask as indicated by CDC guidelines for appropriate droplet and airborne isolation patients

**HR Questions**

• **If I am quarantined, do I use PTO?**

  We are committed to taking care of our employees. We will look at whether the quarantine is a result of personal travel or through patient care.

  If you are quarantined due to personal travel and are asymptomatic, you can use PTO or unpaid time. We will look at an alternative option for time away from work if the quarantine is a result of patient exposure.

  If you have systems, on quarantine or not, call Sedgwick at 855-653-7472 or visit [https://viaoneexpress.sedgwickcms.net/UHS](https://viaoneexpress.sedgwickcms.net/UHS). We encourage all employees and supervisors to review leave policy.

**General COVID-19 Questions**

• **What is COVID-19?**

  The 2019 Coronavirus, or COVID-19, is a new respiratory virus first identified in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China in December 2019. It is part of a larger family of viruses called coronavirus, some of which are in circulation normally and can cause illnesses like the common cold. This Coronavirus is not the same strain coronavirus as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) or Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS).
• **Where is COVID-19?**
The first confirmed case of the COVID-19 in the United States was reported in January 2020. Since then, cases have spread throughout the US. This is an evolving situation.

• **What are the symptoms?**
Symptoms of the COVID-19 can include:
  - Fever
  - Cough
  - Shortness of breath

• **How is COVID-19 spread?**
According to the CDC, the virus is thought to have originated from an animal but is now spreading from person to person. Coronaviruses, including this new one, are thought to spread via exposure to an infected person’s respiratory droplets—such as those produced when a person coughs or sneezes.

• **How long after infection are symptoms apparent?**
Public health officials say the symptoms may appear 2 to 14 days after exposure to the virus.

• **What is the screening process for patients?**
Currently the screening includes looking at:
  - Symptoms of COVID-19
  - Travel to a highly infected area or close contact with a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19
  - Differential diagnosis testing to determine if the individual has another infection such as the flu

• **How can I help protect myself from getting COVID-19?**
The CDC recommends some simple steps to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses, including:
  - Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based sanitizer
  - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
  - Avoid close contact with people who are sick
  - Stay home when you are sick
  - Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue and then throw the tissue in the trash
  - Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces

• **What do I do if I am sick?**
Stay home if you are sick. If you feel you need to seek medical care, please call the ED in advance of arriving and wear a mask, if possible.

• **Should I wear a mask?**
There is currently no recommendation from the CDC for the use of masks by the general population in the United States or while traveling.

- **Does the flu shot protect against this?**
  The seasonal flu vaccines does not protect against COVID-19. However, we are still in flu season and it does help provide some protection against the flu.

- **How many tests have been done in the region?**
  You can check local health department websites to see how many tests have been confirmed.

- **Where can I find updates?**
  You can find updates from trusted sources including the CDC, World Health Organization and your local health departments. In addition, you can find GW-related updates on our intranet COVID-19 information page and through regular electronic communications. You can also go to [http://go.gwu.edu/covid](http://go.gwu.edu/covid) for GW-related information.