



Safiyya Shabazz MD, FAAFP
The family practice that loves you back!

Thursday March 12, 2020

Dear Valued Patients,

If you have been following the news, you are aware of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. We are starting to see a few cases in the greater Philadelphia area and we want to let you know how we have prepared based on current guidelines.

We have increased our efforts at disinfection to keep our office as clean as possible. Exam rooms are sanitized after every patient and shared areas are wiped down throughout the day. We are especially attentive to high touch surfaces such as doorknobs, light switches, faucet handles, and the reception counter. We are also working to ensure we have the appropriate personal protective equipment for our patients and staff when it is necessary to see sick patients in the office. Many supplies have been difficult to obtain. If you have been an FMA patient for some time, you know that we also use diffused essential oils to enhance our environment. We like to include some ancient wisdom when we can!

What is Coronavirus?

Coronaviruses are a family of viruses that are known to cause the common cold and flu-like illnesses with symptoms like fever, cough, shortness of breath. The COVID-19 strain of coronavirus is a new strain that is currently causing a global outbreak and has higher risk for causing severe illness, especially in vulnerable populations.

Who is at risk?

The patients who are most at risk for a serious outcome are people over 50 with other illnesses. Children typically have mild illness and are at the lowest risk. They can, however, transmit the infection to family members or other close contacts who may develop more severe symptoms.

What do I do if I am sick?

If you are having respiratory symptoms including fever, cough or shortness of breath, **PLEASE CALL OUR OFFICE** to speak with our staff and see if you need additional medical attention. If you come to the office without calling, you will be asked to return to your car and call. Because many of our patients are older or have health conditions that put them at increased risk if infected with COVID-19, we are making an effort to minimize the need for people who could be carrying the infection to visit the office.

- Mild illness will be evaluated by the physician or nurse practitioner using our telemedicine platform. If prescriptions are needed, they will be sent in to the pharmacy.
- More significant symptoms will be evaluated by the physician or nurse practitioner using our telemedicine platform. After that evaluation, your physician or nurse practitioner will let you know if they think an in-person visit is necessary and where that should be conducted. We may ask that you stay in your car and we'll come to you (to collect a sample, for instance).
- Severe illness will be directed to the emergency room.

Should I get tested if I am worried?

Phone: 215-924-2440
Fax: 267-437-2346

22 E Mount Airy Ave
Philadelphia, PA 19119

info@fountainmed.net
www.fountainmedonline.com

- COVID-19 tests will be available this week (3/11/20); however, we have a limited supply of test kits. Your physician or nurse practitioner will determine if you require testing.
- If testing is recommended (or required by your employer), a test for more common respiratory viruses may also be performed.
- Independence Blue Cross has confirmed it will cover the cost of this test fully. (They also will cover telemed visits with no copay). Check with your insurance company regarding coverage.

What can I do to stay safe?

Common-sense precautions can help keep you safe:

- Wash your hands frequently for at least 20 seconds. Alcohol based sanitizers are also effective if they contain at least 60% alcohol. Several DIY recipes found online dilute the alcohol below 50%!
- Avoid touching your face. This can be hard to do, be mindful.
- Do not cough/sneeze into your hands – use a tissue or elbow, if necessary. Then perform hand hygiene. The virus can live on cloth surfaces up to 9 days.
- Limit unnecessary travel and gatherings. A walk outdoors without touching anything is generally safe. The virus is spread by respiratory droplets, which can travel about 6 feet.
- Be prepared to stay at home for several weeks or longer, to practice social distancing. This means having those essential items on hand that your family needs to have, without frequent trips outside of your home. Try to get a 90 day supply of your regular medications and at least make sure you have a 1 month supply on hand.

Additional information

- Philadelphia Department of Public Health Health Information Portal: <https://hip.phila.gov/>
- CDC COVID-19 Information site: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- What is social distancing and how can it help? https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_distancing

We hope that this information has been helpful. Some of the recommendations may change as the situation evolves. Please reach out if you have any additional questions or concerns.

Peace & health!



Dr. Shabazz, NP Valeria & The Staff at Fountain Medical Associates