

Mayflower Health & Wellness Infection Prevention and Management

The Coronavirus Update #2 March 5, 2020

Mayflower professional staff has been and will continue to actively assess the “coronavirus” situation. Actually, there are a number of different communicable viruses in the family of coronavirus. The culprit getting all the current attentions is COVID-19.

We have gathered information from national sources, from the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH), and from local medical professionals. First identified in China, this new virus has resulted in hundreds of confirmed cases in that country, with additional cases being identified in a growing number of other countries, including the United States. At this writing, there have been **NO** confirmed cases in Iowa.

The virus has been shown to be spreading person-to-person. Currently, the overall risk to Iowans is considered “low.” The IDPH is working with federal, state, local public health, and clinical partners to share information as it becomes available.

The virus is spread in large droplets by coughing and sneezing. This means that the air will not infect you. **BUT**, all the surfaces where these droplets land are infectious for about a week on average. Everything associated with infected people will be contaminated and potentially infectious. You will not be infected unless your unprotected face is directly coughed or sneezed into or unless your hands pass it into your nose, mouth, or eyes.

If you have symptoms of fever, dry cough, and/or shortness of breath and malaise or have had contact with a person who has a diagnosis of infectious disease, you are encouraged to contact your physician **BY PHONE** and follow their instructions.

Here are some everyday preventive actions to help lessen the spread of respiratory viruses:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds each time (“Happy Birthday” 🎵 twice). Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.
- Suspend hand shaking for now. Use a wave, fist bump, elbow bump, slight bow, etc.
- Practice “Social Distancing,” that is, keep a six-foot bubble between you and other people when possible.
- If possible, cough or sneeze into a disposable tissue and discard. Use your elbow only if you have to. The clothing on your elbow will contain infectious virus that can be passed on for up to a week or more!
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Use ONLY your knuckle to touch light switches, elevator buttons, etc. DO NOT use the bottom of a cane to activate automatic door opener buttons. Lift the gasoline pump handle with a paper towel or use a disposable glove.
- Open doors with your closed fist or hip. Do not grasp the handle with your hand, unless there is no other way to open the door. This is especially important on bathroom and public building doors.
- Use disinfectant wipes at stores when they are available, including wiping the handle and child seat in grocery carts.
- Keep a bottle of sanitizer available at your home's entrance(s) and in your car for use after getting gas or touching other contaminated objects when you can't immediately wash your hands.
- Regularly clean and disinfect frequently-touched objects and surfaces, including your cell phone. (Regular household cleaning agents are effective.)
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- The U.S. Centers for Disease Control does not recommend facemasks for the general public.

Questions? Contact Jacki Hicklin, RN, Mayflower Assistant Director of Nursing/Infection Control Supervisor at 641-236-6141 x233 or jhicklin@mayflowerhomes.com.

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