



## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT COVID-19

### *What is Coronavirus?*

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness that can spread from person-to-person. The virus that causes COVID-19 is novel coronavirus that was first identified during an investigation into an outbreak in Wuhan, China.

### *How is COVID-19 spread?*

The virus spreads from direct contact with respiratory droplets of persons with COVID-19 via:

- Coughing
- Close personal contact with someone that is ill (within about 6 ft.)
- Touching a surface affected by the virus, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes before cleaning your hands

### *Where Has COVID-19 Been Diagnosed?*

COVID-19 has been diagnosed in dozens of countries on six (6) continents, but the spread of COVID-19 in the general public has only occurred in a few countries. Currently, the highest risk countries include China, Italy, Iran, and South Korea, followed by Italy and Iran. The affected countries and CDC travel advisories can be found at: [Locations with Confirmed COVID-19 Cases](#) and [CDC Travel Notices](#).

***You should contact your healthcare provider or local healthcare facility before traveling to these locations so that precautions can be taken to minimize risk of exposing others.***

### *How Does COVID-19 Compare to the Flu?*

To date there have been 29 million infections and 16,000 deaths from influenza during this flu season. Because the risk of influenza and influenza-related death is much higher than COVID-19, those who have not yet been vaccinated this season should get a flu shot. A flu shot can still prevent and/or minimize severity of influenza and protect against influenza-related deaths.

### ***How Can I Protect Myself and My Family from COVID-19?***

Currently, there is no vaccine for the virus causing COVID-19. Healthcare officials stress the best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus. Individuals should follow these preventive measures:

- Wash hands with soap and water often, for 20 seconds each time.
- When soap and water is not available, use alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with individuals who are sick.
- Stay away from public places such as work, school and daycare when sick.
- Cover your cough and sneeze.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces such as phones, tables and doorknobs.
- Teach your children and others to follow these steps.

### ***If I Had Contact with Someone Who Has COVID-19, What Should I Do?***

If you have had contact with someone who has been confirmed to have COVID-19, you should:

- Contact your healthcare provider for further guidance, and let them know about your contact.
- Report if you have the following symptoms: fever, coughing, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing.

Your healthcare provider will be able to take the necessary steps to help prevent further spread of the virus prior to your visit.

### ***What Is West Suburban Medical Center Doing to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19?***

At West Suburban Medical Center, our number one priority is to keep patients, visitors and staff safe. We prepare our healthcare workers to rapidly identify patients at risk for Coronavirus.

- We have plans in place for safely evaluating and treating patients diagnosed with COVID-19.
- We monitor the progression of Coronavirus daily and receive debriefings from the Chicago Department of Public Health weekly. This information is crucial for modifying policy and clinical practice recommendations in real time.