

Date: March 2020

Dear Patient,

RE: COVID-19 or Novel Coronavirus

By now you will be well aware of the nature of this highly infectious virus which is going to be affecting many people in our community in the days and months to come.

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a highly infectious respiratory illness. Often the first signs of illness are fever and cold symptoms, including fatigue, muscle aches, dry cough and shortness of breath. The typical onset is 2 to 14 days after exposure to another infected person. The issue is some people have NO SYMPTOMS OR SIGNS. In most people it is usually a relatively mild illness. However for people over the age of 60, and/or those who have some form of immunocompromise, hypertension or diabetes, may suffer from much worse symptoms, with some eventually developing pneumonia, and potentially even death.

Why should I be concerned about COVID-19?

COVID-19 can be a devastating infection in people with a weakened immune system - e.g. patients with leukaemia, after organ transplantation, diabetes, hypertension, heart condition, treatment for cancers of any sort, etc. In elderly adults, COVID-19 is a much more significant illness than in children and there is a greater risk of complications developing. COVID-19 appears to be relatively mild in pregnant women, younger children and most adults, however, they may then act as modes of transmission - via droplets which transmit when in close proximity.

What should I do now?

If you are normally healthy, COVID-19 is likely to be a relatively mild illness however standard precautions include; maintaining 1.5m between people, avoiding elderly people, and going outside unnecessarily. The infected person can spread infection possibly for up to 19 days post-infection. If you or your loved ones has a weakened immune system, please contact your Doctor if you suspect anyone near you may have been exposed to someone with the virus.

What should I do if I think myself or my family has COVID-19?

If you suspect COVID-19, do not attend a crowded medical centre waiting room, as this may increase the possibility of spreading the infection further. Contact your Doctor for a PHONE or VIDEO consult, and they will provide medical advice. Currently Panadol is the considered the best medication to control fever.

Can my child stay in childcare / preschool / school?

Children may spread the infection to others. Although current medical advice from the Government indicates school attendance as acceptable. This is a rapidly evolving situation - please make yourself familiar with Government announcements.

Take-aways:

- Please stay at home if you are mildly unwell, feel free to contact our Practice and book a phone consult if you are worried. Otherwise use precautions including wearing a mask, washing your hands regularly, and most importantly DON'T PANIC!
- Please present to your local Emergency Department if: you feel short of breath, extremely lethargic, and have a fever over 37.5 degrees
- Maintain 1.5 metres distance from other people in social situations, and avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.

Telehealth with your Doctor

We will be conducting telephone / televideo consults with patients. Please be aware there are specific criteria for Bulk-billing. Please contact the Practice for availability and booking.

Thank you for your understanding. Should you have further questions about COVID-19, please refer to the following website:

<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/alerts/Pages/coronavirus-faqs.aspx>

Kind Regards,

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And The Management Team @ Mind Your Health Medical Centre NEUTRAL BAY