Coronavirus

Coronaviruses are a family of viruses that can cause illnesses such as the common cold or acute respiratory syndrome. In 2019, a new coronavirus was identified as the cause of a disease outbreak in China. The virus is now known as the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2. The disease is called coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

Symptoms of COVID-19 may appear two to 14 days after exposure and can include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing

The severity of COVID-19 symptoms can range from very mild to severe.

Risk factors:

- Recent travel from or residence in an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19 as determined by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) or the World Health Organization (WHO)
- Close contact with someone who has COVID-19 — such as when a family member or health care worker takes care of an infected person

Not everyone will get sick. People who are older (greater than age 70) or have existing medical conditions such as heart disease, chronic lung disease, diabetes, chronic kidney disease and cancer may be at higher risk of serious illness. This is similar to what is seen with other respiratory illnesses, such as influenza.

Patients with blood malignancies such as non-Hodgkin lymphoma, chronic lymphocytic leukemia, acute myeloid leukemia, acute lymphoblastic leukemia and multiple myeloma are most at risk. Also, those in active treatment for any type of cancer and those who've undergone bone marrow transplants.

Prevention:

Although there is no vaccine available to prevent infection, you can take steps to reduce your risk. WHO and CDC recommend following the standard precautions for avoiding respiratory viruses:

- Wash hands often with soap & water, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Cover your mouth and nose with your elbow or tissue when you cough/sneeze.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth if your hands aren't clean.
- Avoid close contact with anyone who is sick.
- Avoid sharing dishes, glasses, bedding and other household items if you're sick.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces you often touch.
- Stay home from work, school and public areas if you're sick.

The CDC doesn't recommend that healthy people wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19. Only wear a mask if a health care provider tells you to do so.

NEBRASKA CANCER SPECIALISTS

17201 Wright Street
Suite 200
Omaha, NE 68130
Phone (402) 334-4773
Fax (402) 330-7463

NebraskaCancer.com