

Additional Guidelines for management of patients meeting surveillance criteria for COVID19.

Nurses, Physicians, and APPs-Document all phone interactions with patients in a phone note.

Information and guidance for patients on the phone or who may appear in the office as a “Person Under Investigation” (PUI) for COVID19. **Do schedule the patient for a clinic appointment, or advise that they come to the clinic. After the nurse has confirmed screening information and symptoms. Physicians and APPs will decide by phone assessment whether the patient should remain at home or be directed to the ED.**

Reassure and Inform Your Patients

Coronavirus causes symptoms similar to the flu. Patients may experience cough, fever, and shortness of breath. Most patients will have mild to moderate flu-like symptoms and will not require hospitalization. Some patients may develop pneumonia and more severe respiratory symptoms with difficulty breathing.

Physicians and APPs. If you decide that the patient does not require inpatient treatment and can be monitored at home the following instructions can be given to patients:

- 1) You may have COVID19 or the novel Coronavirus based on your symptoms and travel screening. I will be notifying the NJ DOH and they will determine if you require specific testing for the virus. A representative from the NJ DOH may contact you.
- 2) Give instructions for care as you would advise a patient who has the flu. Stay home, do not go to work or school. Do not share utensils and other items with other members of the household. Stay in one room of the house if possible and minimize contact with other people in the house who are not sick.
- 3) Rest, drink fluids, take acetaminophen or ibuprofen for fever as directed.
- 4) Reassure patients that you will closely follow their progress through the illness at home and make frequent follow up calls to check on patient’s progress (patients will be understandably anxious, let them know that they are not alone and that you will be carefully following them).
- 5) If your symptoms worsen and you are having any difficulty breathing, or other severe signs of illness such as unable to tolerate fluids, you should go to your nearest emergency room or call 911. Call ahead and let the ED know that you may have Coronavirus. Tell the 911 operator that you may have Coronavirus.

Other Information to Guide Decision Making

Patients who are older and have underlying health issues may worsen with progressive respiratory symptoms in the second week of illness. Risk factors for progressing to severe illness may include, but are not limited to, older age, and underlying chronic medical conditions such as lung disease, cancer, heart failure, cerebrovascular disease, renal disease, liver disease, diabetes, immunocompromising conditions, and pregnancy.

The decision to refer monitor a patient in the inpatient or outpatient setting should be made on a case-by-case basis. This decision will depend on the clinical condition of the patient on initial assessment via phone or in the event a patient arrives in the clinic, patient's risk for rapid deterioration, the patient's ability to self- monitor and recognize need to call for help if symptoms are worsening, and home environment.

No aerosolized medications or respiratory testing should be done in the clinic.

Immediately inform the local health department to report a suspected case of COVID19 (This should be reported to the county in which the patient lives).

To find contact information for local health departments go to www.localhealth.nj.gov

For Middlesex County:

Middlesex County Health Officer Contact

732-745-3121

Emergency After Hours Contact

732-745-3271

If you cannot reach local health department personnel, providers should report the case to the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH), Communicable Disease Service at:

609-826-5964 (Mon-Fri 8:00am-5:00pm)

Emergency After Hours Contact

609-392-2020

NJ Department of Health COVID19 Hotline: 1-800-222-1222 Available 24/7 to answer questions

Special Circumstances

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- 1) Walk –In Patients:** Patients who make walk in to a practice sick, should be screened, registered and treated according to the instructions for any patient arriving sick at check-in to the clinic.

After greeting the patient

We have a new screening process and are asking all patients a few questions.

- Are you sick today with fever, cough, or cold symptoms?

If answer is NO, continue with specific screening for COVID19

If answer is YES, direct patient to a mask (masks are kept at all front desk check in locations) and ask them to put it on. Continue with specific screening for COVID19

Have you done any of the following in **the last 14 days?**

- Have you RETURNED FROM or had a household member RETURN FROM travel to China, South Korea, Japan, Italy, Hong Kong, Iran, Singapore, Taiwan, Vietnam or Thailand **IN THE LAST 14 DAYS?**

OR

- Had direct contact with an individual with confirmed COVID-19 (new Coronavirus) **IN THE LAST 14 DAYS?**

If answer is NO, thank patient and continue with check-in for clinic.

If answer is YES, to one of the above travel or exposure questions ask-

- Have you felt feverish and had a cough in the last 24 hours?

If NO, continue with scheduling or check-in to clinic.

IF YES, direct the patient to a mask (masks are kept at all front desk check in locations) and ask them to put it on. Notify clinical staff to isolate and place patient in a room immediately and keep door closed. Notify patient's physician or APP of patient arrival.

2) New Patients-Calling to schedule an appointment with a subspecialist AND who have a primary care provider.

Patients who meet surveillance criteria for a PUI, are new to the practice, and are scheduling a visit with a subspecialist should be told that the screening questions indicate that they may be infected with the Coronavirus and to please contact their primary care physician immediately.

- 1) Take the name and phone number of the patient's primary care provider.
- 2) Take name, address, and phone number of patient
- 3) Instruct the patient to stay home and not go to work or school.
- 4) **Instruct the patient that if they are in respiratory distress to call 911 and go to nearest ED.**

Nurse should record the information in a phone note and:

- **Call the patient's primary care provider's office to notify that patient has screened positive for potential infection with Coronavirus when calling to schedule an appointment with one of our specialists as a new patient. Ask the primary care provider to please contact the patient.**
- **Report patient information and the primary care provider to the local NJDOH.**

3) Scheduling patient for a procedure or surgery. Those practices that have scheduling for surgery, or procedures out of their divisions or offices should screen patients for possible infection to COVID19.

For Schedulers:

We have a new screening process and are asking all patients a few questions. Have you done any of the following in **the last 14 days?**

- Have you RETURNED FROM or had a household member RETURN FROM travel to China, South Korea, Japan, Italy, Hong Kong, Iran, Singapore, Taiwan, Vietnam or Thailand **IN THE LAST 14 DAYS?**

OR

- Had direct contact with an individual with confirmed COVID-19 (new Coronavirus) **IN THE LAST 14 DAYS?**

If answer is NO, thank patient and continue to schedule the appointment.

If answer is YES, to one of the above travel or exposure questions ask-

- Have you felt feverish and had a cough in the last 24 hours?

If YES, DO NOT SCHEDULE FOR SURGERY OR PROCEDURE. Transfer the call to the surgery clinic nurse line.

References and Additional Resources:

<https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/ncov.shtml>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>