

# Davis Square Family Practice Newsletter

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Issue: COVID-19 Update

March 21, 2020



## FAMILY MEDICINE

Greetings!

## COVID-19 Newsletter #2 March 21, 2020

### Latest Updates As of The 21st of March

Office Hours have been slightly adjusted  
Monday thru Friday 9AM until 5PM  
Office phone is 617-666-9577

Dr Bershel's cellphone (for **COVID-19 CONCERNS** of all types) is 617-230-7988. **Please** only use when the office is **CLOSED**. Texting preferred if possible.

### Office Visits

We are doing mostly **telemedicine visits**. But we will see acutely ill patients who do not have symptoms that could be attributable to COVID-19.

All staff are wearing masks and keeping 6 feet apart from one another. We are cleaning rooms with sanitizer after each visit. We are avoiding keeping patients waiting in the reception area but designated seating spots are at least 6 feet apart.

### Testing For COVID-19

Mount Auburn will test all employees with symptoms. If you are not an employee and are a patient of ours, you can be tested if you have symptoms that suggest you may need admission. Call us, and a clinician will prescreen you.

**Patients with weakened immune systems** who have mild symptoms may qualify for testing too. If you are able to quarantine and your symptoms are mild or improving, we ask you to remain quarantined for 14 days from the start of your symptoms and *NOT* get tested at this time.

**I will be checking every day to see if the criteria for testing have changed and will send out a newsletter if it has.**

### **Symptoms**

Fever, dry cough, sore throat, mild shortness of breath, fatigue, occasionally 'runny nose', muscle aches, diarrhea, headache. You do not need many or all of the symptoms for you to suspect COVID19 infection.

As most of us now know, **you may be *TOTALLY* symptom free and still have the disease and be contagious..**

### **Incubation Period/Timelines**

The time from contact until you come down with symptoms is from 2 days to 11.5 days. The average is 5 days. Most people who get worse and *MAY* eventually need hospitalization will start feeling worse around 1 week into the illness. If at anytime during the illness you start to feel better, that is a sign that you will continue to improve. Most people who have severe complications will not do so until almost day 14. **Currently we are told that 80% of people will recover with relatively mild symptoms.** Close to 20% will progress to having symptoms (typically extreme shortness of breath) that will warrant evaluation for admission. About 1/4 of that sicker group (5%) will require the intensive care unit and a ventilator. **There is usually a few day window where the shortness of breath gets worse before you need to go on a ventilator. So you should already be in the hospital before you need the intensive care unit. If you are feeling short of breath and cannot reach us certainly call 911.**

### **Treatment**

**Quarantine yourself if you think you have symptoms related to COVID-19.** Isolate yourself from others in your home. Stay away from common spaces.

Despite that the World Health Organization said to the contrary, **avoid Ibuprofen, Naprosyn (and all NSAIDS)** except if you are on aspirin for protection from heart attack or stroke. This is the latest recommendation from the Mount Auburn Hospital infectious disease specialist. NSAIDS *MAY* increase the chance of complications if you get COVID-19. That same specialist says that suppression of fever is unnecessary and fever is viewed as the body's natural immune defense rather than something caused by the infection itself.

Statins (a class of medications used to lower cholesterol) May have some protective effect with COVID-19. If you do not need them for cholesterol lowering then we, of course, would not prescribe them. *BUT* if you have been

recommended to be on them but declined them for personal reasons (not side effects), then call the office on Monday and we can discuss ordering them.

Hydroxychloroquine - May be helpful in the treatment of COVID19 but formal studies must be conducted to prove that is not only effective but SAFE in the face of this illness.

### **How Long To Quarantine?**

14 days from the time symptoms first show up. If you spent more than 15 minutes with someone who has tested positive or has symptoms strongly suggestive of COVID-19 infection, quarantine for 14 days since last contact with that person. If you become symptomatic, then it resets to 14 days from the time of first symptoms. People who have more extreme symptoms, especially those who were hospitalized, may need more than a 14 day quarantine. Call us if you are unclear as to when to end the quarantine.

### **Social Distancing**

Since there is no treatment for the virus, social distancing is the best overall 'cure' for this disease. Quarantine as much as possible given your individual circumstances. Go shopping if you absolutely need something indispensable. When you do go shopping that is the time to consider getting other items. The group of people that are largely treating this like a 'snow day' and hanging out in close quarters with strangers or friends are putting others at risk. This will lead to a much more widespread illness here and around the country.

### **Anxiety related to COVID-19**

This was already an anxiety-ridden society. COVID-19 has added to that for many of us. So if you want to talk with any of us, we would love to offer support. It is one of the main reasons why we went into family medicine. *Even if it is after-hours we are here for you.* So give us a ring anytime!!

Deb (Bershel, MD)

And

Michelle Clarke, FNP

Andrea Dandridge, FNP

Carmen Phillips, FNP