



SARS-CoV-2
PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Big Bend Regional Medical Center recognizes that the current worldwide coronavirus outbreak is being discussed on the news, over social media, and in other ways. As your regional center for hospital care, we would like to release the following information regarding coronavirus. Please note that information is constantly being updated, so this is the latest information we have as of March 3, 2020.

1. The current coronavirus outbreak is caused by the virus SARS-CoV-2. It is causing the disease COVID19. Precautions need to be taken to ensure the health and safety of our communities.
2. We will notify appropriate officials and agencies so information flow can remain transparent on any suspected or documented cases of COVID19 in the area. We have NOT seen any documented cases of COVID19 in the Big Bend area at this time.
3. SARS-CoV-2 is spread by droplets (from sneezing or coughing) and by touching something contaminated by SARS-CoV-2 (such as countertops, computers, doorknobs).
4. We expect core infrastructure (power, water, supermarkets, internet, government, etc) to continue to work.
5. The number of people who are likely to get sick is higher than our healthcare systems can handle.
6. BBRMC is in constant contact and receiving updates from its own internal emergency preparedness taskforce, as well as from external sources such as the state health department and the CDC. Local physicians and healthcare providers have been educated on COVID19 and we will continue to update our medical community as more information is known about this virus.
7. If cases are noted in the Texas area, daily life will be impacted in important ways. Travel is likely to be limited in certain areas, and public gatherings will probably be closed if local cases are noted. Schools may need to close, based on recommendations from the Texas Education Agency which is working closely with state and federal health agencies.
8. **SARS-CoV-2 infections will continue to spread and infections in our local area is extremely likely. HOWEVER, the goal is to slow the spread so the hospital can handle the increased patient load without being overwhelmed or running out of resources.**
9. 81% of cases of COVID19 are causing *no* or mild symptoms (similar to a cold or mild flu). The symptoms include fevers (101F+), dry cough, body aches, and headaches. Most people exposed to SARS-CoV-2 will do well at home, allowing about 14 days to rest, hydrate, and recover. We encourage anyone with mild symptoms to remain home and not to leave your home for 14 days from the start of your symptoms.
 - a. Please do not come to a clinic or hospital for mild symptoms, since we do not have the means to test for SARS-CoV-2 at this time. Only 12 labs in the country have this capability at this time, and there are no resources to test patients who have mild symptoms.
 - b. If you are experiencing severe shortness of breath (you can't catch your breath), you are dehydrated, or have other severe symptoms please *call* your clinic or hospital to notify them that you are coming and how severe your symptoms are. The hospital needs to know ahead of time about your presence so we can help care for you while still containing the possible virus you may have.



Ways to prevent infection:

- Stay calm, but take the infection seriously. This outbreak will tax our local health system and resources, and we all need to work together to stay healthy.
- Stay home if you or someone in your home is sick.
- Stay at least 6 feet away from anyone coughing or sneezing, and wipe down surfaces in your homes and work daily.
- Leave medical supplies for healthcare workers. You shouldn't be stockpiling masks or other medical supplies. They are needed in the hospital to keep our healthcare workers healthy, so we can keep caring for the community.
- Wash your hands. Get in the habit of washing your hands frequently and thoroughly and after covering your cough. Wash hands after touching your face, mouth, nose, eyes.
- Minimize your exposure. Now that we are seeing community transmission in parts of the US, it is time to start seriously cutting back on your exposure to other people.
 - Cancel all non-essential travel, including upcoming vacations in the next 60 days.
 - Avoid large-scale gatherings
 - Work from home, if possible. Employers, allow any possible employee to work from home.
 - Minimize direct contact with others, including hugs and handshakes.
 - Reduce your trips out of the house. If possible, shop for two weeks of groceries at once.
- Keep calm and prepare, educate others around you.