Proactive Steps to Help Keep You Safe From COVID-19

March 18, 2020 By Connie M. Welch

If you have hepatitis C, liver disease, had a liver transplant, or other immune compromising health conditions, you are a risk of complications associated with the COVID-19 virus.

The best medicine is prevention. Take the necessary steps to avoid exposure.

Symptoms of COVID-19: *CDC reports most common symptoms

- *Fever (above 99.6 and higher)
- *Shortness of breath
- *Coughing
- Fatigue
- Sore throat
- Diarrhea and lower GI tract upset have been reported in 5 to 50% of those infected
- Abnormal liver enzymes in 20-30% of those infected

Prevention
Due to the high risk of infection, there are preventive measures to help keep you safe

- Work from home if possible.
- Social distancing helps prevent the spread of the virus. Even if you're not sick, you can still become a carrier. The incubation period is 2 to 14 days after exposure.
- Hand washing for 20 seconds or longer. Wash hands often.
- Use antibacterial soap and alcohol-based sanitizer if possible.
- Sneeze or cough into a tissue. If a tissue is not available, use your sleeve.
- Avoid shaking hands and hugging (especially those not in your household).

- Avoid touching your face and mouth.
- Clean surfaces with antibacterial and/or bleach-based solution.
- If you do go out-avoid large crowds at all possible. Shop for groceries and necessary items limiting exposure to the least amount of people as possible. At a minimum of 6 to 8 feet apart from others to avoid coughing or sneezing particles. Wear medical masks if available.
- Wipe off handles to shopping carts, door handles, keyboards, phones, and other areas you will need to touch with sanitizing wipes. Wear disposable latex gloves if possible.

Testing

- If you develop symptoms of COVID-19, call your doctor and tell them your symptoms. Your doctor will advise if you need to be tested.
- Ask if your doctor's office has telehealth communication.
- Do not go to the ER unless your symptoms unless your doctor advises or if your symptoms are severe.
- Ask your doctor's office if they have test kits, or if you're able to get tested from a Quest or LabCorp location.
- Some highly affected areas may provide drive through testing. Contact your local Health Department for information.

Treatment
There is no current treatment for COVID-19. Treatment of symptoms to reduce fever, and respiratory problems will help unless symptoms continue to worsen. Talk to your doctor about what over the counter medications to use and/or any prescriptions you may need.

Medical officials, the CDC, and FDA, are working diligently on anti-viral treatments and sharing information from other countries like China and others that have been widely affected.

Talk to your doctor about your specific symptoms and medical condition. If you are a high-risk patient, if you do have any symptoms, even if they are mild, contact your doctor immediately.

Isolate yourselves at home and those who live in the house with you. Use over the counter medications to help relieve symptoms. Keep in contact with your doctor if your symptoms are not relieved.

If you are infected, remember, the high percentage of people with COVID-19 get over it and are fine. If you are immune-compromised and you do become infected, following your doctor's orders and receiving the proper treatment for your symptoms will greatly reduce complications.

Vaccine News
Currently, there is no vaccine for COVID-19. Medical researchers, the CDC, FDA, and WHO (World Health Organization), are working diligently on treatment and vaccines. Clinical trials are currently working on a vaccine.

In Summary
The most effective way to prevent the disease is isolation with social distancing to reduce the spread of COVID-19. With the reduction of the virus, we will soon be able to see results and eliminate the virus with diligence from all of us. Each of us can make a positive difference in eliminating the spread of COVID-19.

Stay positive. Keep calm. Stay connected with your doctor if you have symptoms. Follow the CDC and authorities' guidelines. We will get through this.

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