COVID-19 Script for Staff

Q: I have been travelling and am worried that I might have the coronavirus. What should I do?

A: If you have recently returned from travelling to any of the affected countries – Iran, South Korea, Japan, Italy or China, please call the Vermont Department of Health at 802-863-7240. The Health Department will be in regular contact to monitor you for 14 days. If you have symptoms, contact your doctor’s office. Do not assume you need to go to Urgent Care or the Emergency Department – there is no specific treatment available and you could be exposing others.

Q: How can I be tested for the coronavirus?

A: Most people do not need to be tested. If you have a fever and cough or shortness of breath and have been exposed to someone who is known to have the virus or traveled to one of the high risk areas call your doctor’s office for advice. Your physician or nurse will work with our infectious disease specialists and the Vermont Department of Health to determine if you should get tested. Unless it is a medical emergency, call the doctor’s office first – do not go to Urgent Care or the Emergency Department. If you have no symptoms, you do not need to be tested.

Q: What symptoms should I worry about?

A: The symptoms of the coronavirus are very similar to those of the flu – cough, fever and shortness of breath. If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, you should call your doctor’s office.

Q: I don’t have symptoms, but I did recently visit one of the countries affected by the coronavirus. What should I do?

A: Call the Vermont Department of Health and they will advise you on appropriate next steps.

Q: How is it transmitted?

A: We know it spreads through droplets in the air, so cough and sneezes can spread to nearby people. We expect it is likely that it can contaminate surfaces. The incubation period we’re working with right now is 14 days, however this may change as we learn more about the virus.

Q: What are the best things I can do to stay healthy?

A: Basic preventive practices are those that we should be using all the time:

Clean your hands frequently – use portable alcohol hand scrub, wash your hands before you eat. Don’t touch your face. Avoid crowded spaces. Avoid travelling to countries the CDC has highlighted as having widespread, sustained transmission. Social distancing is something that will become increasingly more important – our schools, conferences and other organized activities will need to consider this on a case-by-case basis.

If you’re sick, stay home. Clean your hands. Wash high-use surfaces every day. If you’ve been in a place where the virus is circulating, call your primary care doctor to get advice. Do not go to the clinic or the emergency department unless you’re ill or short-of-breath, or otherwise need medical help.

Q: Will wearing a mask help?

A: Wearing a mask may not protect you from a viral infection and is not a practical everyday solution. If you are coughing, however, a mask may reduce the risk you pose to others.