

FROM THE STAFF: What you need to know about COVID-19

Most are aware now that the Coronavirus has emerged in the US. There have been lots of questions as to the response.

We have been working under the guidance of the Southeast District Health Department (SEDHD) and will be monitoring the county's illnesses daily. This will guide what actions need to be taken from the clinic and hospital perspective. The flu is still very active in this area.

We will keep our protocols in place and continue to communicate with patients by mail, text, and social media accounts. In order to have effective communication please ensure we have the most up to date phone numbers and emergency contacts both in the clinic and the hospital.

The COVID-19 spreads from person to person contact primarily from people that are showing signs of infection. These signs initially include fever and cough but will sometimes become quite serious leading to pneumonia or acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS).

Our best defense against COVID-19 and any other virus is to practice good hand hygiene. This is accomplished by washing our hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after coughing or sneezing.

Other best practices are the following:

- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Keep a distance of 6 feet from an individual who appears to be sick as this is how far droplet particles can travel.
- Please keep your child home from school if they have a fever (100.4 F or higher) or they are not feeling well.

There is not a cure or vaccine for the COVID virus. Right now, in the hospital, all we can do is treat fevers with Tylenol and ibuprofen, give fluids, give oxygen and breathing treatments. Antibiotics and antivirals have not been shown to be effective.

We cannot stress enough to stay home to decrease the transmission to others. Most conversations with providers will review supportive care as listed above (drink plenty of fluids, eat nutritious foods, take Tylenol/ibuprofen as needed for fevers). Please only come to the hospital if you are feeling extremely short of breath.

The SEDHD website will contain any updates relevant to southeast Nebraska. Residents are encouraged to visit the department's website www.sedhd.org or call the health department toll free at 1-877-777-0424. The CDC has a barrage of information as well.