



# Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Harris Health System is aggressively responding to the Coronavirus COVID-19 present in our community. We are working hard to minimize the risk of further disease spread to our staff, patients and the Harris County community.

On Monday, March 9, Harris Health started screening patients and visitors at its 48 clinical locations. Each visitor is asked about recent travel history to areas known to have community-spread coronavirus cases and about current symptoms of cough, fever and respiratory difficulties. Additionally, patients are being asked to limit the number of people accompanying them to one adult person on any clinical visit.

Harris Health's Ask My Nurse telephone triage line opened on Tuesday, March 10, as a community resource for screening clinical symptoms and to answer questions by residents of Harris County. Ask My Nurse is available 9 a.m.-7 p.m., seven days a week. On the first day of operation, staff received 34 COVID-19 related calls. On Wednesday, COVID-19 related calls increased to 152.

Harris Health continues to work with our local and federal health authorities to ensure we use and share only factual, confirmed information.

We anticipate more cases, including community transmission, as this is a natural course of a viral illness. Eighty percent will have little or no symptoms; 5 percent of the time elderly and immunocompromised persons will develop severe illness.

#### What we know:

- Coronavirus is transmitted via droplet, it is not airborne
- Most common symptom is fever (almost 100 percent of the time) followed by cough and a feeling of discomfort
- Sneezing, runny nose and congestion are not common for Coronavirus
- This flu season alone in the U.S.: 32 million cases and 18,000 deaths (less than 0.1 percent fatality rate)
- So far, worldwide Coronavirus spread: 128,626 cases and 4,726 deaths (3.6 percent fatality rate)

---

**Harris Health encourages those who are healthy with no symptoms to stay at home, do not come to Harris Health hospitals, health centers or clinics to be screened or tested. If you do not meet the screening criteria – traveling within the last 14 days to communities with known spread of Coronavirus or you have been in close contact with a sick person who is known to have coronavirus, you will not be tested.**

**Seek care if you have a high-fever and cough. If you have mild symptoms such as congestion, low grade fever or other health concerns, call your doctor's office.**  
**If you do not have a regular doctor, call Ask My Nurse, 9 a.m.–7 p.m. at 713-634-1110 for an assessment and advice on your symptoms.**

---

With this in mind, we stress that the best ways to protect yourself from coronavirus and reduce the risk of exposure is to maintain social distance from people and practice sensible measures such as:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water is not available
- Stay home when you are sick
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue into the trash
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces
- Seniors and people with pre-existing conditions should avoid large gatherings
- Work from home if possible

For more information, visit The Center for Disease Control and Prevention's website or Harris County Public Health's website.