FACT SHEET

CORNONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19)

WHAT IS THE CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19) AND HOW IS IT SPREAD?

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a novel (new) coronavirus that previously had not been seen in humans. The virus was first detected in Wuhan City, China, in December 2019. The abbreviation COVID-19 has three parts – 'COVI' stands for coronavirus, 'D' stands for disease, and '19' represents the year in which the outbreak started. COVID-19 is <u>not</u> the same type of coronavirus that causes mild illness or the common cold.

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person, especially among people who are in close contact with one another, which means within about 6 feet. The virus is spread through respiratory droplets that are released when an infected person coughs or sneezes. If the droplets land on another person's mouth or nose, they can be inhaled into that person's lungs. It is also possible to get COVID-19 by touching objects or surfaces that have the virus on them and then touching one's nose, mouth, or eyes.

People of any age with underlying medical conditions, such as heart disease, diabetes, or respiratory conditions and older adults are at an increased risk for COVID-19 infection. The CDC states that "people with developmental disabilities who have underlying medical conditions may have difficulty communicating signs and symptoms of illness, accessing information, and understanding and practicing preventative measures". (CDC, 2021a). These individuals may need to be monitored closely for signs of COVID-19.

REFERENCES:
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2021a, March 2). People with Developmental Disabilities. Retrieved on April 8, 2021 from https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-developmental-disabilities.html

CDC. (2021b, April 2). Frequently Asked Questions. Retrieved on April 8, 2021 from https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html

SYMPTOMS
Symptoms include fever, coughing, and shortness of breath, which may appear 2-14 days after exposed to COVID-19. In reported cases, symptoms have ranged from mild to severe. Other symptoms may include chills, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of sense of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, and diarrhea.

The CDC notes that "atypical presentation of COVID-19 occurs often and older adults and people with comorbidities may experience fever and respiratory symptoms later during the course of illness." The CDC further states that "Some people with mild symptoms initially may worsen in the second week of illness." This means that caregivers should closely observe people who are older and/or those with pre-existing conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease or cancer for symptoms later in the course of the COVID-19 infection. Inform the physician immediately of late symptoms so an appropriate management plan can be determined.

REFERENCES:

CDC. (2021a, February 16). Interim Clinical Guidance for Management of Patients with Confirmed Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19). Retrieved on April 8, 2021 from https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/clinical-guidance-management-patients.html

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2021b, February 22). Symptoms of COVID-19. Retrieved on April 8, 2021 from https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I THINK I MIGHT HAVE COVID-19?

Call your doctor if you develop symptoms of COVID-19, have been in close contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19; have recently been to an area with ongoing spread of the virus, or have other concerns regarding your need to be tested. Your healthcare provider can provide you with guidelines regarding testing for the virus.

To find a testing site in Pennsylvania, the following website has been established by the PA Dept of Health:
https://pema.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=1a4c139769d646839e1549bcb6a668f1

People who have COVID-19 and are mildly ill should isolate themselves at home during their illness. Activity outside the home should be limited, except when medical care is needed. Avoid using public transportation. As much as possible, stay away from other people in the home, and use a separate bathroom, if available. Restrict contact with pets while sick with COVID-19.

Seek emergency medical attention if symptoms worsen. Worsening symptoms may include difficulty breathing, ongoing pain or pressure in the chest, new confusion, inability to arouse/awaken, and bluish lips or face. If you have a medical emergency, call 911 and notify the dispatcher that you have COVID-19. If possible, place a facemask over your mouth and nose before emergency professionals arrive.

REFERENCES:

CDC. (2021, March 17). COVID-19 Testing Overview. Retrieved on April 8, 2021 from
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/testing.html

CDC. (2021, March 17). What to Do If You Are Sick. Retrieved on April 8, 2021 from:
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html

SLOW THE SPREAD OF THE VIRUS

The CDC recommends the following actions to slow the spread of the virus:
- "Wear a mask
- Stay 6 feet away from others
- Get vaccinated
- Avoid crowds and poorly ventilated spaces
- Wash hands often
- Cover coughs and sneezes
- Clean and disinfect
- Monitor your health daily"   (CDC, 2021)

REFERENCE: CDC. (2021, March 8). How to Protect Yourself and Others. Retrieved on April 22, 2021 from
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html

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