COVID-19
Coronavirus Disease

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The spread of COVID-19, caused by a novel coronavirus, is rapidly evolving and is being studied by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), World Health Organization (WHO), and other health organizations.

Risk Factors

- Travel-related Risk: The greatest risk of infection is for people living in or who have traveled within high-risk countries or communities where spread is occurring.
- Healthcare Workers: Healthcare workers and close contacts of people who are infected with the virus are at an increased risk.
- Community Spread: There are some instances in which a patient's exposure is unknown and cannot be traced to relevant travel history or contact with another known patient.
- Suppressed Immune Systems: People with compromised immune systems, including many cancer patients, are more susceptible to viruses, including COVID-19. Some cancer therapies, such as targeted drugs, steroids, as well as some cancer types, like blood cancers, can result in a weakened immune system.

Symptoms

The symptoms of COVID-19 are similar to the flu and respiratory illnesses. Symptoms may appear from two to 14 days after exposure. The CDC recommends that patients showing signs and symptoms be isolated to prevent infecting others with the virus for a period of 14 days.

If a person experiences any of the following symptoms, especially fever, cough, or shortness of breath, he or she should consult a physician.

- Fever
- Cough or sore throat
- Shortness of breath
- Fatigue
- Aches and pains
- Nasal congestion
- Runny nose
- Diarrhea

Prevention

Common-sense steps can help prevent spread of COVID-19:

- Wash hands thoroughly for at least 20 seconds and frequently. If soap and water are unavailable, use alcohol-based hand rub.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue. Throw tissues in the trash.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Avoid close contact with sick people.
- Stay home if you are not feeling well.
- Avoid large crowds while receiving therapy.
- Disinfect frequently touched surfaces with household cleaning spray or wipe.
- **Call Southern Cancer Center first if you have questions or concerns.**

The CDC does not recommend that the general public wear facemasks. Facemasks are recommended for patients who have flu or other infectious illnesses, including coronavirus (COVID-19).

Treatment

There is currently no vaccine or antiviral treatment to protect against COVID-19. Patients should receive supportive care to relieve symptoms. Some people who contract the virus have no symptoms or experience mild symptoms. Prevention plays an integral role in avoiding infection and being exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19.

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, World Health Organization — Updated 3/9/2020