**Coronavirus - Putting it into Perspective**

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As a healthcare provider, husband, father, and son, I understand the concern and confusion people have about what is known as newly-emerged Coronavirus (or COVID 19). Friends and family ask me about it. I hear people discussing it when I’m out socially. Second-by-second stories, comments, and images are driving how we understand the impact of coronavirus. Some information is accurate. Some is wrong.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), COVID 19 does not pose a significant risk to the United States at this time, however, we are planning and preparing for how to care for patients should we have them. This is not new. We continuously plan for, and anticipate the healthcare needs our community will or might have so that we are prepared to give that care.

Whenever there is a threat to our health, understanding it is key to preventing and managing it.

[As I shared previously,](https://www.atlanticare.org/blog/the-coronavirus-vs-the-flu-%E2%80%93-its-no-contest) it’s important to put your level of risk into perspective.

Here is what you can, and should do, to be informed about, and protect yourself from coronavirus and other viral infections.

**Know the facts.** The websites of the [CDC](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html) and the [New Jersey Department of Health](https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/ncov.shtml) (NJDOH) have information and resources that explain COVID 19. Additionally, the NJDOH has a hotline number,

1-800-222-1222, which the public can call for information.

**Heed your health.** Many of the people who are fearful of getting coronavirus haven’t gotten vaccinated for flu this season. Flu still poses a greater risk for us. New Jersey – and AtlantiCare – are still experiencing a high level of patients being diagnosed with flu. Take care of yourself by getting enough sleep and exercise and eating a balanced diet. And of course, what can be most challenging for many of us, is to manage stress.

**Prevent getting or spreading viruses.** Wash your hands often with soap and water or an alcohol-based gel, cover your coughs and sneezes, stay home when you are ill (unless you need to seek medical attention) and avoid others who are ill.

As we learn more about COVID 19, we base care for our community on many things. This includes using information we have learned in caring for people through past health threats and encouraging overall wellness as a key strategy for staying healthy.