

## Western Springs Asthma and Allergy

### COVID-19 Information for patients as of 3/18/2020 (adapted from the AAAAI)

**What is COVID-19?** COVID-19 is a new form of coronavirus first identified in December 2019. Coronaviruses, in general, are not new and are a common cause of colds and upper respiratory infections.

**How is COVID-9 spread?** COVID-10 is thought to spread mainly person to person, through medium sized respiratory droplets in coughs and sneezes. It can live on surfaces, from hours to days, through these droplets.

**What is the time period when COVID-19 can spread?** Unfortunately, people can spread infection to others before symptoms first appear. It can then be spread for up to 14 days after symptom onset (probably longer)

**What are the symptoms of COVID-19?** The majority of people experience mild illness but severe illness and death can occur. Fever, cough, shortness of breath and fatigue are the most common symptoms. Gastrointestinal symptoms have also been reported.

**How is COVID-19 treated?** Treatment currently relies on supportive care to treat symptoms when they occur. As of today there are no approved vaccines or medications although both are actively being looked at in the medical community.

**When should I cancel my regularly scheduled allergy appointments?** Some non-urgent visits will likely be rescheduled for you or you will be offered a telehealth visit. Any urgent asthma visits, that need to be seen, will be screened for active fever, cough, recent travel or contact with others with similar symptoms.

**Is it safe to come to the Allergy office?** We are taking all recommended precautions to prevent spread of COVID-10, including reassessing what care must be done in a face-to-face manner, screening all patients and accompanying family members, regularly disinfecting exam rooms and public areas, and staying up to date with current recommendations from the local Department of Public Health.

**I'm getting allergy shots- what should I do?** Please refer to the "Injection Hours" page on our website. We will be increasing the interval between injection weeks until further notice. The hours for injections will remain the same for now, but please check our website for any updates. Administration will continue in our office but we will be asking patients to wait in their cars for the 30 minute wait time and return to the office to be checked out. Patients are to come back to the office immediately for any reaction symptoms while they wait.

**Will your office be closing?** We may need to adjust the number of appointments or types of visits depending upon future spread of COVID-19. Please refer to our website for the most up to date information.

**What if I have asthma? How will COVID-19 affect me?** We don't have a lot of information regarding risk of asthma exacerbation with COVID-19. For now, **we recommend continuing all recurrently prescribed daily asthma medications. Call our office if you have frequent symptoms or are requiring your bronchodilator (albuterol, levalbuterol, ipratropium) more than two times per week at rest or if it isn't preventing your exercise triggered symptoms.**

**Are steroids harmful if someone has COVID-19?** It does not appear that inhaled steroids or short courses of oral steroids are harmful for treatment of asthma. Risks of stopping regular use of inhaled steroids include a loss of asthma control and possible need for treatment with oral steroids. Please do not stop any medications without discussing with your doctor.

**I have an immune deficiency- what precautions should I take?** Please contact your doctor directly to discuss any necessary precautions. There are a wide variety of immune deficiencies that may have different risk. All general precautions should be followed as outlined above.

### **What to do to prevent exposure to COVID-19**

- Social distancing: avoid any gatherings, malls, gyms, play dates, sporting events, travel
- Avoid close contact (6 feet) with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.
- Use tissues to cover coughs and sneezes, then discard tissue in the trash.
- Clean/disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces. The virus may be transmissible up to three days from a surface.

**IF YOU ARE SICK, STAY AT HOME!**

**IF YOUR CHILD IS SICK, KEEP YOUR CHILD HOME!**

We do encourage you to call if you feel you need help. Please be patient with us, your primary care doctors, and the emergency department staffs as we are all getting many calls.

Good sources of up-to-date information are:

- <http://www.dph.illinois.gov/>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/>
- <https://www.who.int/>
- [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(20\)30567-5/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(20)30567-5/fulltext)