

Script – Print – When to Seek Help for COVID Symptoms Most COVID Symptoms Can Be Treated at Home

When Le Ann Galbraith, a nurse practitioner with OSF HealthCare, came down with COVID earlier this summer, she knew exactly what she needed to do. Stay home and self-medicate.

“I was able to manage my symptoms at home, pushing lots of fluids, Tylenol and Motrin as needed and I did take some over-the-counter allergy medicine,” says Galbraith. “In general, I feel okay. I still have some fatigue and can work and do my job; it just feels like I have a lingering cold.”

Galbraith isn't alone. Hospital ERs and urgent care facilities are being overwhelmed with people experiencing COVID-like symptoms including runny nose, sore throat, headache, persistent cough and fatigue.

Galbraith works in an OSF Prompt Care at OSF Saint Anthony Medical Center in Rockford, Illinois. She says people coming in to be seen for mild COVID symptoms can bog down the system that needs to be agile to respond to patients with stroke, heart attack and broken bones.

“What we see right now with the current COVID infection is your symptoms are typically mild like you would see with a common cold or a mild case of influenza,” says Galbraith. “You can stay home as long as you're able to manage your symptoms with over-the-counter remedies with things like Tylenol and Motrin, you can use over-the-counter flu medications as long as you are able to take them and have no problems with that. The point is for you to stay home. And we're not just seeing that.”

But that's not the case for everyone. Anyone who has a chronic condition should pay close attention to their symptoms and contact their provider with any questions or concerns.

“It can still cause complications,” says Galbraith, “it can still affect people especially those with chronic conditions; we've seen patients here who've had kidney transplants, organ transplants, heart problems, they've had open-heart surgery or maybe they've had a chronic condition like COPD or asthma, those are the types of things that in the back of your mind ‘is this affecting my everyday life with my chronic disease and is it becoming worse, or is it something that I should continue to monitor and continue to treat as I would at home?’”

For home treatment, Galbraith recommends over-the-counter medications like Tylenol and Motrin for fever, body aches and pain. For sinus issues, congestion, ear or facial pain, try a decongestant or allergy medication. And for a persistent cough that produces mucus, Galbraith says Mucinex is a good option. And continue to rest and consume plenty of fluids.

Medical experts continue to urge the public to follow several recommendations:

- Get vaccinated
- Get a booster if you're eligible

- Choose outdoor activities over indoor activities whenever possible
- Wash your hands often
- Avoid close contact with others
- Wear a mask in public places
- Stay home if you're sick or have symptoms of COVID-19

Galbraith says the goal of any health care facility is to always give the best care to every patient no matter their condition.

“If you feel like your symptoms have reached a point where you’re not able to manage it, we definitely want to see you,” she adds. “We’re going to get through this, and we’ll do it together.”

For more information on COVID, visit [OSF HealthCare](#).