

BROADCAST-Coronavirus Risk is Low for Most

OSF HealthCare Still Taking Precautions

OSF HealthCare leaders have been closely monitoring all developments with the latest coronavirus including the latest U.S. government declaration on Friday of a health emergency. The declaration would allow the government to release more resources to states for equipment and testing.

However, at least one infection prevention and control expert says the risk to most of the population is low.

Lori Grooms, director of Infection Prevention for OSF Healthcare, says human coronaviruses are common throughout the world and commonly cause mild to moderate illness in people worldwide. However, the emergence of novel (new) coronaviruses, such as SARS and MERS, have been associated with more severe respiratory illness.

With the latest corona virus, now being referred to as 2019 Ncov (pronounced N-coh-VEE), she says most people are not at risk.

“There should be minimal concern for most of our population with the fact that most of these cases have been brought over from China. They all had related travel from Wuhan, China.” (:12)

Grooms says the virus has a 14-day incubation period, meaning symptoms would develop within 14 days of exposure. A person’s risk would be evaluated using a two-pronged approach.

“I have to have traveled to Wuhan, China and I have to have respiratory symptoms. So, I have to have fever, a cough, shortness of breath, even potentially diarrhea but it’s the two of those that go hand in hand that put me at risk for having this novel coronavirus and needing to be isolated and tested.” (:23)

After two days of deliberations, an emergency committee convened by the World Health Organization [decided not to declare a global health emergency](#) — but planned to meet again within 10 days, acknowledging the “urgency” of the situation.

The number of confirmed cases of the new coronavirus has risen to five. The five patients, all people who traveled to Wuhan, China are in isolation at hospitals including one woman in Chicago. Since the outbreak was first reported in December, OSF HealthCare has been monitoring and instituting recommended Center for Disease Control and Prevention protocols.

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Even though patients have died from the virus, the first 17 people were largely older men, many with underlying health problems. Grooms says treatment would only involve antibiotics if patients develop pneumonia caused by a bacterial infection.

“Usually it’s just managing their symptoms, giving them fever reduction medication, helping them with breathing treatment; worse-case scenario ventilators.” (:09)

If you have been in Wuhan, China in the last two weeks or know someone who might have been exposed to the novel coronavirus AND you have symptoms, please call ahead to your health care provider or immediate care center such as [OSF Urqo](#) or [OSF PromptCare](#) so they can make arrangements for you to be assessed.

