

Dear Friends of Thompson:

As you're well aware, the coronavirus (COVID-19) has arrived in New York State. The number of confirmed cases is almost certain to rise in our state over the next several weeks as verified testing becomes more available.

Please know the overall risk of serious illness from COVID-19 is low. Most patients who are infected will have mild upper respiratory symptoms including fever, nasal congestion and cough. A small number of patients can, however, develop complications and some of these patients will require hospitalization. Those at greatest risk are elderly community members and those with chronic medical conditions. Parents, it is natural to worry for our children, but so far the data appear to show that the overwhelming majority of children have a mild upper-respiratory illness, or no illness at all from this virus.

Since the illness is predominantly spread between people who are in close contact (within approximately 6 feet of one another) through droplets produced when the infected person coughs or sneezes, it is imperative that we all remain vigilant. Wash your hands frequently for at least 20 seconds. Cover coughs and sneezes with the crook of your arm. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands. Teach your children proper hygiene practices as well. Forgo shaking hands with people at this time. They will understand.

Although there is no indication of the virus at Thompson, colds and flu are everywhere. If you develop flu-like symptoms and are not short of breath, the best thing you can do for yourself and your community is stay home. You can contact your provider for advice. However, please know that at this time, the COVID-19 test can only be performed by NYS and the CDC.

Should you experience mild cold or flu-like symptoms, please call your doctor before you visit and advise them of any risk factors for the coronavirus (travel to China, Italy, South Korea, Iran or Japan in the last 14 days, or close contact with someone proven to have the virus). If you are feeling severely ill, and in particular, are having trouble breathing, do not delay seeking medical care. Call 911 and tell the 911 operator if you have risks for the coronavirus.

If you have risks for catching the virus due to recent travel or exposure to a known case, but you are not sick at all, you have options. If our local Department of Health has asked you to stay home on isolation, this is what you should do. Your employer may do the same. You will likely have to be home for at least 14 days after your potential exposure. You might be asked to take your temperature twice a day, and report to your doctor or the health department if you feel sick or develop a fever.

This guidance is dynamic and subject to change. Be well, and for the most up-to-date information, visit www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov.

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