Easing Fears about Coronavirus (COVID-19)

If you are worried you might have the Coronavirus known as COVID-19 please consider the following advice:

We are still in cold and flu season in our community. Most upper respiratory symptoms including cough, fever, sore throat and congestion are caused by one of the more common viruses that are circulating this time of year, not COVID-19.

It is recommended that you take everyday precautions like washing hands frequently, and staying home when sick.

Should I be tested for COVID-19?

If you have any of the conditions that may increase your risk for a serious viral infection -- age 60 years or over, or have other medical conditions -- call your physician’s office and ask if you need to be evaluated.

If you do not have a high-risk condition and your symptoms are mild, you do not need to be evaluated in person and do not need to be tested for COVID-19. There are currently no medications to treat COVID-19.

Testing for COVID-19 will only be conducted once ordered by a licensed healthcare provider following an appropriate clinical assessment. You cannot just show up for testing at this time.

Everyone must do their part to slow down the spread of COVID-19 and to avoid overwhelming the healthcare system by responding appropriately.

If you think you have a respiratory illness, please follow this advice:

- If you are sick and have mild symptoms, stay home and self-isolate as much as possible.
- If you are sick enough that you would normally go to the doctor, call ahead to your care provider for instructions.
- To avoid spreading respiratory illnesses, please do not show up at a clinic, hospital, or testing site without calling in advance for instructions.

These are measures that everyone should take, especially older adults, people with underlying health conditions or people whose immune systems are compromised:

- Avoid large crowds, especially in enclosed spaces.

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• Encourage all family members to cover their cough and sneezes with a tissue.
• Maintain social distance to avoid possible exposure to viruses.
• Avoid handshakes and hugs.
• Frequently clean “high-touch” surfaces in your home or workplace. Disinfect doorknobs, handles, keyboards, railings, remote controls, tabletops and counters.
• Check on neighbors and friends, especially older adults, by phone.

To help you sort through your concerns, all UHC healthcare facilities have set up health information phone lines:

• Billings Clinic HealthLine: 406.255.8400
• RiverStone Health Public Health Information line: 406.651.6415

Acting responsibly can help protect your health and the health of our community.