

NEW CORONAVIRUS DISEASE—PRECAUTIONS YOU CAN TAKE

The new coronavirus disease—named “COVID-19”—that started late last year has become a major concern of public health officials worldwide. At the time of this writing, there were nearly 86,000 confirmed cases in 62 countries, including 66 cases (7 recovered) in the US. What makes this virus so much of a concern is that it is very contagious and is a new virus. While much is still not known about this virus, it seems that approximately 80% of those infected experience only mild symptoms. However, we in Stoneybrook are a vulnerable population and should take extra care to protect ourselves and others.

As with the flu, common colds, and any contagious disease, limit your exposure to others that are already ill.

- Keep at least 6ft (2m) distance from anyone that appears ill.
- Wash your hands with soap frequently for a minimum of 20 seconds, then use a clean paper towel to
 - dry your hands;
 - turn off the water; and,
 - open the door to exit the bathroom.
- Always use a tissue when coughing or sneezing.
- Try not to touch your face.

Development efforts for a COVID-19 vaccine have already begun. However, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) believes that it could be 18 months or longer before a vaccine will be generally available. The NIH recently announced new clinical trials of the antiviral drug remdesivir which has shown some **very preliminary, limited,** positive results for COVID-19 treatment.

The CDC believes that community acquired infections in the US may soon become common. That said, the current risk of exposure is still thought to be very low. So, **now** is the time to take actions while local transmission risks are still low.

- Update your Help-Your-Neighbor information cards that have been supplied by the SVOA Preparedness Committee. Contact Steve Napack (steve.napack@gmail.com, 541-220-0510) if you need additional cards.
- Make sure that you have plenty of your regular preparedness non-perishables (canned food, paper towels, etc.) on-hand.
- Check that you have a *working* thermometer (those batteries get old) in your first-aid kit.
- Secondary infections can make primary illnesses much more severe. So, work with your healthcare providers to make sure that you are up to date on vaccinations (influenza, pneumonia, etc.) that are recommended for your particular situation.
- Keep informed of local conditions and recommendations with the Oregon Health Authority at <https://www.oregon.gov/oha/pages/index.aspx>. Also, there is a very good NYT article that details additional steps we can take. See *How to Prepare for the Coronavirus* at <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/25/health/prepare-for-coronavirus.html>

In the coming weeks/months, if you think that you have been exposed to the virus and feel ill,

- Contact your healthcare provider to get instructions and information. Clinics and hospitals may have specific procedures in place to help ensure your safety, as well as the safety of other patients and the healthcare providers.
- If you are instructed to stay at home, be sure to inform a loved one or neighbor of your condition so they may check on you periodically.

For more information on pandemic preparedness and COVID-19, please see <https://www.ready.gov/pandemic> and <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/>.