RVNAhealth Coronavirus Update

At RVNAhealth, the health and safety of our patients and team is always a top priority. Amid the growing concerns around Coronavirus, we are taking additional steps for extra vigilance. This is an evolving situation and it is extremely important that our staff can safely perform their work and confidently care for our patients and clients in need.

Prior Experience with Public Health Outbreaks

RVNAhealth has served patients during public health outbreaks in the past, as well as through many intensive flu seasons. In all these instances, we have followed standard precautions and hygiene practices, and implemented second tier precautions for those people exhibiting signs and symptoms of infection. We are confident in our practices and procedures as we face COVID-19.

How Infections Occur

It is important to remember that no matter the infection, there are three things necessary for an infection to occur:

1. **Source** — which means a place for the infection to live, i.e. sinks, human skin, surfaces.
2. **A susceptible person** — with a way for the germ to enter the body, for instance through the eyes when touching your face.
3. **Transmission** — which means the way the germs are moved from one place to a person, like touching a doorknob and then rubbing your nose or vice versa, placing the germ from your nose to the doorknob surface via your hands.
How does COVID-19 spread? What we know so far.

The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person.

- Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
- Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or can possibly be inhaled into the lungs.

(CDC) [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/transmission.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/transmission.html)

Did you know that the droplets from your cough or sneeze can travel 6 feet in the air if you don’t cover your mouth when you cough/sneeze? Follow cough/sneeze etiquette by coughing/sneezing into your elbow or a tissue, not your hand.

The virus may also spread from contact with infected surfaces or objects.

It may be possible for a person to get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is currently not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

(CDC) [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/transmission.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/transmission.html)

Standard Health Precautions

RVNAhealth clinicians and caregivers – including nurses, therapists, social workers, pastoral care workers and home health aides – practice standard precautions every day of the year to protect their patients and themselves from the spread of infection.
Information

Standard Precautions are used for all patient care. They’re based on a risk assessment and make use of common-sense practices and personal protective equipment. Standard precautions are used to protect both the patient and healthcare providers from infection, as well as prevent the spread of infection from patient to patient.

RVNAhealth care workers are all trained regarding the personal protective equipment that must be used to prevent transmission of infection. Different patient “tiers” are assessed to ensure use of proper equipment.

Some measures the healthcare worker may utilize include:

- **Equipment:**
  - Wearing of masks, only when someone shows signs and symptoms of respiratory illness. The use of an N95 respirator mask in the general public is not required, nor recommended.
  - Wearing of goggles and/or a gown if contact with body fluids is expected.
  - Cleaning of equipment (i.e., a blood pressure cuff with special cleanser frequently).
  - Daily cleaning of uniforms.

- **Trained Behaviors**
  - Habitual and frequent handwashing. Hands are washed often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, prior and following patient visits and contact; before eating; after going to the bathroom, blowing one’s nose, coughing, or sneezing. Hands are always washed if visibly dirty. Hands are the perfect transmission vector. Good hand washing does stop the spread of infection!
  - If soap and water are not readily available, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol is used.
  - Requirement to stay home when feeling ill.
Trained Behaviors (continued)

- Proper identification and escalation of new or exceptional symptoms in patients which may indicate a change in status.
- Ongoing training of patients and individuals on best practices for staying healthy.

Additional Measures for Coronavirus

- As always, all RVNAhealth clinicians are fully stocked with necessary supplies to follow expected infection control protocol. Re-education has occurred to ensure protocols are being followed.
- All RVNAhealth staff have been trained in identifying Coronavirus symptoms as well as the proper process for treatment and escalation.
- Increase in the frequency and intensity of cleaning the RVNAhealth building. Antimicrobial cleaning solutions continue to be used and surface wipes are available throughout the building.

Ongoing Reminders

All individuals are encouraged to adhere to the following best practices to help keep yourself and others healthy:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after visiting the restroom; before eating; after blowing your nose, coughing, sneezing or touching your face.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then discard the tissue in the trash. Clean your hands AGAIN.
Ongoing Reminders (continued)

• Use alcohol gel hand sanitizers when soap and water are not available.
• Utilize disinfectant wipes to wipe down frequently used areas such as counters, keyboards, and other areas with frequent hand exposure.
• Keep hand cleansers with you (60% alcohol recommended).
• Avoid congregating in large tightly populated spaces or events.
• Stay home if you are feeling unwell.
• Call your physician should you develop a fever and a cough or difficulty breathing.

Please contact RVNAhealth at 203-438-5555 or BeWELL@rvnahealth.org with questions or for additional Information.