High Watch has been following the developing risk posed by the novel (new) coronavirus (COVID-19) closely. While there are a small number of confirmed cases in Connecticut, we take the potential risks of this virus seriously.

We are constantly monitoring the spread of the virus, and continue to closely follow new guidelines or recommendations issued by the CDC as the public health community learns more about how COVID-19 is contracted, spread, and most effectively treated.


High Watch offers the following information to help keep our community aware of potential spread of the virus in our community and learn ways to reduce possible exposure.

**What You Need to Know**

COVID-19 is primarily spread through respiratory droplets. Generally, individuals within six feet of someone who is contagious and come into contact with these droplets will be infected. A person can 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 not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

Symptoms of COVID-19 appear within two to 14 days after exposure and include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Difficulty breathing (shortness of breath)

In the large majority of those infected, COVID-19 causes only mild cold symptoms. Severe cases can lead to pneumonia, difficulty breathing and death. According to data from China, the elderly (70+), and those with pre-existing medical conditions appear to be more vulnerable to the virus.

**How You Can Be Prepared**

While there have been a small number of confirmed cases of the COVID-19 in Connecticut thus far it is a good idea for individuals to practice proven methods to protect themselves from exposure to respiratory viruses.

The most important you can do to protect yourself from respiratory viruses is to practice good hand hygiene. You should wash your hands often, especially when visiting a public place like your workplace, a store, or a school. Wash with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available. Additionally, avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

In addition to protecting themselves, individuals have a responsibility to help prevent the spread of a respiratory virus. You should avoid close contact with people who are sick, and stay home if you are sick. Always cover your mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and throw the tissue in the trash, then wash your hands. At your home and work, clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

The symptoms for COVID-19 include fever, cough and shortness of breath. Anyone who is experiencing these symptoms and has travelled to area where there have been confirmed cases of COVID-19, or have come in close contact with a person who is being evaluated for the virus, should contact their healthcare provider immediately for instruction on what you should do.

If you have flu-like symptoms, you should stay home and help relieve symptoms by getting rest, staying hydrated and taking steps to control your fever.

If you are unclear or concerned about your symptoms, you should contact your healthcare provider. Your physician will instruct you how to proceed with any care you need.
For severe symptoms, including difficulty breathing, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, new confusion or inability to arouse or bluish lips or face, call 9-1-1 or go to a nearby emergency department for evaluation.


**How High Watch Is Prepared**

High Watch has implemented measures to ensure we are prepared if a patient, visitor, or caregiver with COVID-19 symptoms were to present to our campus. These precautions include:

- A heightened sense of awareness in identifying individuals who are at risk for the disease including assessment of all newly admitted guests upon admission
- A process for identifying and evaluating individuals who may be ill with or exposed to COVID-19
- Additional staff training of infectious disease precautions
- Infrastructure changes to enhance our care for COVID-19 specific cases that will allow us to continue to provide high quality care to other guests
- Ensuring we have the needed medical supplies and protective equipment to effectively isolate and treat patients with COVID-19
- All non-essential employees have been instructed to work from home
- Cleaning efforts have been strongly intensified
- Visitors are no longer permitted on campus with the exception of families dropping off a loved one upon admission

These steps are based upon the most up-to-date recommendations developed by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Connecticut Department of Public Health for identifying, isolating, and treating airborne viruses like influenza.