March 3, 2020

Dear Members,

As the COVID-19 (corona virus) outbreak continues to evolve it is becoming more and more clear there is a very high chance our community will be affected (or already has been). The understanding of this new virus is very incomplete, however, we would like share some basic recommendations based on our current understanding. Most people who contract COVID-19 will **not** require medical attention, and will be able to care for themselves at home, however, it appears to be very contagious and we need to help protect those of us who are at greater risk for severe illness. We strongly request **anyone with cold or flu symptoms do not come in to the office**, instead we are happy to have a phone appointment.

 Precautions to decrease your likelihood of contracting COVID-19:

* **Wash your hands often,**vigorously for at least 20 seconds. Some say even 60 seconds, the amount of time it takes you to sing “Happy Birthday” twice. When you can’t wash your hands, use hand sanitizer with 60% or greater alcohol. Wash your hands when you get home, before you cook, before you eat, after your sneeze or blow your nose, etc. Have your own distinct hand towel or use paper towels.
* Avoid touching things like door handles, railings, light switches, elevator buttons when in public. If you must, make sure to wash your hands afterwards or use a barrier such as gloves.
* Do not shake hands, hug, or high-five.
* Avoid touching your eyes, mouth or nose.
* Avoid crowded places (consider skipping sporting events, the airport, the movies, etc.). Work from home if possible.
* If you are immune compromised, or have other major illnesses you may want to be extra careful about where you go.
* Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and objects.
* Don’t count on masks to keep you from getting sick. However, they can be helpful for sick people to decrease the amount of respiratory droplets expelled into the air. They also remind you not to touch your face.
* Take care of yourself!
	+ Sleep is very important for immune function. Eat a healthy diet low in sugar. Avoid alcohol. Stay active. Take your vitamins!
	+ Joy is very important for immune function. Remember to breathe, let go of what you cannot control (everyone is doing their best), and do something every day that makes you smile!

If you are sick, don’t share it!

* **Stay at home**. Don’t go to work, the store, the movies, church, etc.
* Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw it away and wash your hands.
* If you are concerned and would like to discuss your symptoms, schedule a phone appointment first.

How to prepare:

* **Prepare to be able to stay home for 2-4 weeks**, minimum. Purchase a little extra food every time you go to the grocery store. Non-perishables can always go into your earthquake kit.
* Consider getting an extra month of medications, particularly if they are critical medications.
* Consider supplies needed to take care of a sick person at home.

Information on COVID-19:

* We in fact do not know a lot about this form of coronavirus, but given it is a pandemic threat, it is being studied with great effort.
* COVID 19 is a coronavirus, in the same class of viruses that cause the common cold.
* We don’t yet know how long infected people are contagious before and after the illness, but it could be as much as 2-3 weeks before and after symptoms resolve. **You may carry and spread it without knowing**.
* We do know it is very contagious. It is spread through the air and hand contact. It is also an active virus in the feces of infected individuals.
* It can cause cold symptoms, pneumonia, flu-like symptoms. It can cause death in at least 2% of individuals. Elderly and low immune individuals are at higher risk. **Concerning symptoms include fever, coughing and shortness of breath**.
* It is thought to spread mostly from person-to-person via respiratory droplets among close contacts (within approximately 6 feet of a person with COVID-19 for a prolonged period of time) and by having direct contact with infectious secretions.

Testing for COVID-19:

* **Currently very few people are eligible for testing.**
* We expect testing and criteria (who is eligible for testing) to change as more cases develop in our area and more tests become available.
* As of today, testing is only being done in people who have had direct contact with someone with COVID-19 AND have symptoms, OR in people who are very sick with pneumonia and are hospitalized and other likely infections have been ruled out.

Remember, while most of us are not in danger, we should prepare for major disruptions in our lives. If an outbreak occurs here, we will only be doing phone appointments for your and our safety.

We will do our best to answer any additional questions.

Sincerely,

*The Water’s Edge team*

LINKS FOR MORE INFORMATION:

o   [Island County Public Health](https://www.islandcountywa.gov/Health/Pages/AllNewsAndAnnouncements.aspx?news=24)

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

o   [NPR article](https://www.npr.org/2020/02/27/810016611/coronavirus-101-what-you-need-to-know-to-prepare-and-prevent) on how to prepare

o   Corona Virus explained by [Laurie Garrett](https://youtu.be/Jcthdee6CXs) [you tube video]

o   [CNN](https://www.cnn.com/2020/02/26/health/how-to-prepare-coronavirus-united-states-explainer/?hpt=ob_blogfooterold)