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PFF GUIDANCE ON COVID-19

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The Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation medical team is actively monitoring the evolving outbreak of the COVID-19 coronavirus to evaluate the potential health implications for the pulmonary fibrosis (PF) community in the [U.S.](#)

[COVID-19](#) results from an infection by a respiratory virus (coronavirus) that can lead to inflammation and injury within the lungs. In some people, this can progress to a serious illness. However, most people infected with the virus will not become gravely ill.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has identified certain groups that are at higher risk for developing serious illness if they become infected. These include individuals with severe chronic medical conditions, compromised immune systems and those who are elderly.

People living with PF are considered higher risk and should take special precautions to prevent respiratory infections, such as COVID-19, [influenza](#), and other pulmonary pathogens, and limit complications. The CDC's guidelines for people at higher risk are available [here](#).

The CDC, National Institutes of Health and other infectious disease researchers are currently working together to study how the virus is transmitted and to develop vaccines and treatments for those infected with the virus that causes COVID-19.

How is it Spread?

The virus is thought to spread primarily from droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes within six feet of other people. In addition, infection may be spread through

airborne transmission of smaller droplets and particles that can remain suspended in the air over greater distances or over longer times. Also, the virus may be transmitted when a person touches a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touches the eyes, nose or mouth.

Symptoms

Symptoms, which are not specific for COVID-19, appear to occur within 14 days of exposure and should be communicated to your physician include:

- Fever
- Muscle pain or body aches
- Worsening cough
- Increased shortness of breath
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Headache
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

Contact your healthcare provider if you develop symptoms or think you have been exposed.

Precautions

Even as people begin receiving the COVID-19 vaccine, everyday preventive actions, including physical distancing, appropriate hygiene with handwashing and using a face covering, will continue to help avoid the spread of the virus.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol if soap and water are not available. Please see the [CDC's Handwashing Information](#) for more information.
- Avoid contact with people outside your household, distancing yourself by at least six feet.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Stay home as much as possible.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash and wash your hands.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Wear a cloth face covering that fully covers your nose and mouth whenever you are in a public place when social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (grocery stores, pharmacy, etc.). Follow the [CDC's Instructions on How to Wear a Face Covering](#).
- Avoid non-essential travel.

Vaccines

Two vaccines have been approved for [Emergency Use Authorization](#) by the FDA. In accordance with [Recommendations issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), the Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation strongly encourages vaccination for COVID-19, as the benefits far outweigh the risks. To ensure that you are not part of the limited population for whom vaccination is not recommended at this time, reach out to your primary care physician and pulmonologist for more information.

Information

Stay informed by visiting the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's [website](#), the [PFF's COVID-19 Resources](#), and following instructions from your local public health officials.