Thank you for your enquiry regarding Coronavirus (COVID-19). Information is updated regularly and the Pulmonary Hypertension Service is in communications with Alfred Health and Infectious Disease Experts to keep you up-to-date. This is an evolving situation and we are trying to deal with a huge number of calls so please forgive us if we can’t respond immediately.

**Frequently Asked Questions**

**What precautions should I take for my personal protection?**

**Personal hygiene:**
- Good handwashing technique using soap and water or alcohol based gel is essential.
- Avoid touching your face and eyes with UNWASHED hands
- Don’t sneeze or cough into your hands or the air (sneeze/cough into the crease of your elbow).

**Masks:**
- Not required or recommended in the community.
- Will be provided in the hospital if clinically necessary.

**Limit Social Contact:**
- Minimize attendance at group gatherings.
- Work from home if possible.
- Minimize contact with young children as they may have no or very mild symptoms, but spread the disease.

**Who should I contact if I have symptoms?**

**8.30am-4.30pm Mon-Fri:**
Call the Christianne or Trudi 03 9076 2743 to discuss your symptoms and formulate a plan. For non urgent enquiries please email CTEPH@alfred.org.au

**After 4.30pm or on weekends:**
Contact The Alfred switchboard on 03 9076 2000.
Depending on the severity of your illness, you may be directed to:
- The Alfred COVID-19 outpatient testing station (8am-6pm, 7 days per week)
- The Alfred emergency department
- A respiratory staff member
What symptoms do I look out for and when do I need testing?
Symptoms:
The symptoms of COVID-19 are not easily distinguishable from the common cold or Flu and include:
- Fever, respiratory symptoms (cough, shortness of breath, sore throat), headache, vomiting and diarrhoea

Testing:
- Currently we are testing at the Alfred, at present there is some limitations on the availability of testing kits.
- Only those patients with appropriate symptoms AND either international travel or close contact (more than 15 minutes) with a known case of COVID 19 will be tested.
- All cases of severe disease will be tested.
- There is no point in testing even if you have been exposed if you have no symptoms.

What should I do accordingly with my symptoms?
For MILD disease:
- Respiratory symptoms of cough, runny nose, sore throat
- No fever
- See your local doctor

For MODERATE disease:
- Respiratory symptoms plus fever
- Call PAH nurse and discuss review either in isolation clinic or by phone.

For SEVERE disease:
- Respiratory symptoms plus increased breathlessness
- Present to the closest emergency department via ambulance

Should I come to my outpatient clinic appointment?
WE ARE WORKING TO MINIMISE ATTENDANCE AT THE ALFRED.

PBS review: We are currently in discussion with the PBS to have the requirement for an echocardiogram and 6 minute walk test waived until COVID -19 is controlled. We have not yet had any response. At present we do need both investigations to continue the medications. Please attend these booked appointments unless alternative arrangements for your echo and walk test can be made locally.

Other appointments:
If you are stable and feel well, these can be deferred. Telehealth (computer/phone based consultation) can also be substituted.

Should I have the Flu vaccination?
We recommend flu vaccination for everyone when it becomes available in April. However, this vaccination will not protect you against COVID-19.

Should I have a contingency plan?
Have a contingency plan in case of widespread disruptions or illness, where possible, ensure you have adequate supply of your usual medications.

Should I travel overseas or interstate?
We recommend avoiding all travel. You can keep updated via the Australian Smart Traveller website.

What do I do if I need a medical letter for work/travel etc.?
If you require an individualised letter or document/s, we recommend that you book an appointment with your GP
We have developed generic letters for working from home, suspension of gym membership. Please detail what you need in an email.

Information updates
If you wish to be included in a group email or text for updates as the occur, please contact us as above to give us your details (mobile/email).

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