

## Updated on March 20: Q&A from Dr. James Partin on Facebook Live

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### **Why are locations running out of testing equipment and what is HCM doing to help preserve medical supplies and resources?**

Several laboratories are overwhelmed with the volume of COVID 19 testing and some are not taking any more samples. This increased number of testing has caused a significant delay in the resulting of the test. Please be mindful and practice social distancing to help prevent the spread.

In partnership with our physician community, HCM is carefully considering and reviewing all scheduled elective procedures in efforts to minimize, postpone, or cancel electively scheduled operations, endoscopies, and procedures. This also includes diagnostic testing and non-critical therapeutic interventions. We will continue to review this process and make necessary modifications as appropriate.

### **Why aren't we hearing of more cases in children?**

Children are contracting COVID-19 but showing few or no symptoms, that is why it was a great strategy closing schools. For parents to protect children, the advice is the same as for adults.

- Wash hands for 20 seconds,
- Maintain the 6' distance from those potentially exposed
- Never let children visit ones who are ill
- If they are ill, stay home.

### **If I care for a high-risk individual, how can I protect myself and them?**

High-risk individual are those who meet one or more of the following:

- 65 and older
- People who have serious chronic medical conditions like:
  - o Heart disease
  - o Diabetes
  - o Lung disease
- Individuals with a weakened immune system

Caregivers and those who are high-risk need to be even more diligent. Practice social distancing, stay home, stay hydrated and following the prevention guidance.

### **Will warmer weather help reduce the spread of the virus?**

Researchers and scientist initially hoped warmer weather would reduce the incidence. However, the CDC noted it is not yet known whether weather and temperature impact the spread of COVID-19. Some other viruses, like the common cold and flu, spread more during cold weather months but that does not mean it is impossible to become sick with these viruses during other months. At this time, it is not known whether the spread of COVID-19 will decrease when weather becomes warmer. There is much more to learn about the transmissibility, severity, and other features associated with COVID-19 and investigations are ongoing.

### **What does “flattening the curve” mean?**

[insert image of “flattening the curve”]

“Flattening the curve” is critical in for the healthcare industry to ensure there are enough supplies and resources to care for our patients. If no steps are taken to mitigate the spread of the virus, the number of incidents would outstrip the capacity of the health care industry to accommodate them. By practicing these preventive steps, we can keep the number of cases more manageable with current infrastructure.

### **Do I need to take any extra precautions if I am taking antibiotics?**

Being on antibiotics does not make one more susceptible. However, if you are on antibiotics, there is the potential that an individual is facing an illness causing a weakened immune system. Therefore, the weakened immune system increasing the risks. If you are on antibiotics or have an illness causing a weakened immune system, diligently practice the [prevention steps](#).

### **Is there a confirmed case in Fredericksburg?**

Hill Country Memorial learned that an HCM team member has been tested for coronavirus (COVID-19). This team member worked at the HCM Hospital facility and has been and remains self-quarantined. This team member is not a direct care provider and does not live in Gillespie County. HCM immediately worked with the Texas State Epidemiologist on exposure protocols and followed them explicitly.

The state executed extensive contact tracing to reach those who had contact with the individual with instruction to stay home, disinfect, and self-quarantine. Those who had contact with this team member have been tested and are currently in quarantine.

### **Are we more protected from COVID-19 because we live in a small town?**

Fredericksburg and the Texas Hill Country are unique small towns; we are all small during the week but see an influx of visitors on the weekends from around the world. We cannot assume that because we are a small town that we are immune to having cases of COVID-19 locally.

Monday, March 30, 2020

### Important Take Away Messages:

→ **Donate Blood:** Give and Save Lives

Hill Country Memorial will be hosting a blood drive on Wednesday, April 1 from 10am – 5pm in the Hill Country Memorial Wellness Center. To learn more and sign-up today, please visit

[https://donor.southtexasblood.org/.../s.../drive\\_schedule/119308](https://donor.southtexasblood.org/.../s.../drive_schedule/119308)

→ **COVID-19 does not have an age range:** All age groups need to take the virus seriously. Not just high-risk individuals are becoming ill. In the United States 40% of all individuals hospitalized are between the ages of 20 and 50. All need to practice social distancing and follow guidelines to prevent the spread.

### Resources:

[Center for Disease Control](#)

[Department of State Health Services](#)

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