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infected but does not exhibit symptoms of infection. A recent study conducted in New York found that a larger population of citizens had COVID antibodies indicating prior infection despite clinical symptoms. This data has led to a decrease in the death rate determined from original projections at the start of the pandemic.

Avoid wearing gloves in public settings as this increases the spread of infection.

Moreover, the number of confirmed cases will change daily and the impact of the disease will affect each state differently. East Texas could see a spike in COVID-19 cases as our communities begin to loosen social distancing restrictions and stay at home orders.

Although the virus may be deadly for some East Texans, most individuals will experience mild disease and may recover in their homes without additional medical care. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recently expanded the list of possible symptoms of COVID-19. Most people develop symptoms approximately 6 days after exposure; however, symptoms can appear anywhere between 2 to 14 days following viral exposure. Seek prompt medical attention if you experience difficulty breathing, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, new confusion or inability to arouse, or bluish lips or face. Please refer to the list below for the common symptoms associated with Coronavirus infection.

1. Shortness of breath and/or difficulty breathing
2. Fever or chills
3. Cough
4. Fatigue
5. Muscle or body aches
6. Headaches
7. Loss of taste/smell
8. Sore throat
9. Congestion
10. Nausea/Vomiting
11. Diarrhea

You should call your physician or healthcare provider for advice if you experience these symptoms, especially if you have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19 or live in an area with the ongoing spread of the disease. Your physician can provide additional information to you regarding testing and treatment options.

Even though symptoms may be mild, East Texans cannot forgo the use of social distancing, proper hand hygiene practices, and infection control measures to decrease the spread of infection. Social distancing is defined as the mindful practice of reducing close contact between individuals. According to the Centers for Disease Control, social distancing requires individuals to (1) refrain from congregate social settings, (2) avoid mass gatherings, and (3) maintain a distance of 6 feet or more from others if possible (WHO, 2020).

Social distancing helps to decrease the spread of infection within the community (Wu et al., 2020). Many illnesses, like COVID-19, are spread through activities such as coughing, sneezing, and other close contact activities. By minimizing contact with others, we can decrease the spread of infection throughout the community.

Experts agree that handwashing is the number one method to reduce the transmission of infection (WHO, 2020). Hands that are visibly soiled should be cleansed with soap and water. Otherwise, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer is an appropriate alternative if used correctly.

Additional strategies recommended by the CDC include the following:

- Stay home if you have symptoms of COVID-19. Speak to your physician or another healthcare provider regarding the need to self-quarantine for the duration of the incubation period. If you have a positive COVID-19 test, you will need to self-quarantine in your home for 14 days.
- Avoid touching your nose, eyes, and mouth. Use tissues to cover your cough or sneeze and then dispose of the soiled tissue in an appropriate waste receptacle.
- Avoid sharing food and beverages with others, even members of your family.
- Use a disinfectant solution to disinfect doorknobs, light switches, desk, toilets, cell phones, or other frequently used objects (CDC, 2020).
- If disinfectant solutions are difficult to obtain due to supply shortages, household cleansers can be used as an alternative to clean surfaces.

- Create a plan to address sick members of the household. Identify a location in the home where the sick person may quarantine away from other members of the family.
- Wear a cloth face mask in a public setting where social distancing is difficult. Cloth masks are not designed to prevent infection but they have been proven useful to decrease the spread of infection in the community. Face masks can decrease the risk of transmission in individuals that do not experience symptoms of infection (Cheng et al., 2020).
- Avoid wearing gloves in public settings as this increases the spread of infection. Keep hand sanitizer in your purse or vehicle and cleanse your hands before getting in your vehicle. This will decrease the risk of disease transmission to yourself and your family members.
- Teach children about the strategies recommended by the CDC and practice good infection control measures in your own home.
- Have small or school-aged children participate in frequent hand-washing and infection control practices to develop good hygiene practices that will continue when schools resume normal activities.

Additional information regarding current standards, practices, and information related to the local spread of COVID-19 can be obtained through local county health departments or through the Centers for Disease Control Website.

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