Preventing COVID-19

There are no medications that can prevent you from getting COVID-19. Like influenza, it is caused by an easily transmitted virus from close contact with someone with the disease. In addition, there are many patients who either do not develop symptoms to know that they have COVID-19 or are so early in the disease that they have not developed symptoms yet.

THE ONLY WAYS TO PREVENT GETTING COVID-19 IS TO:

• Maintain social distancing by staying away from crowds and ideally at least 6 feet away from others—about the length of your bed.
• Being very careful in washing your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water after encounters with other people or objects outside of your usual environment.
• Avoiding touching your eyes or other parts of your face, especially your nose and mouth.
• Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your arm (not your hands).
• Clean and disinfect “high-tough” surfaces (cell phones, door knobs, light switches).
• Wear a face mask.

Wearing a face mask is believed to reduce the likelihood that you will transmit the virus to others and may help remind you not to touch your face. With cloth face masks, there may be a low level amount of protection from getting the virus, as well.
WHEN SHOULD I OR MY LOVED ONE BE TESTED FOR COVID-19?

If you are without symptoms and able to socially isolate, as opposed to working in a job or living in a setting such as a care home where you interact with a lot of people, you do not need testing for Covid-19. For those who have symptoms, who work or live in a more crowded environment, or who are obese, elderly, or have other medical conditions, their physicians may order testing.

THE TEST

Right now, the common forms of testing involve a nasal swab (q-tip into the nose) or saliva (spit) sample to detect the presence of the virus or a blood test to detect whether you may have had Covid-19 and recovered. The tests for the presence of the virus only tell you that you have the virus or not; they do not say whether you are immune from the disease. The blood test to detect whether you had Covid-19 can say whether you were exposed to the virus in the past, but cannot tell you whether you are immune from the disease. Therefore, any test result will still require social distancing, washing your hands thoroughly, and avoiding touching your face as much as possible.

MOVING FORWARD

Scientists are constantly studying Covid-19 as a new and serious disease. But we are far away from having specific treatments or ways to prevent the disease through vaccination. We also do not know if the virus that causes Covid-19 will go away with warm weather like influenza does.
EVEN WITH THINGS OPENING, WE ALL WILL NEED TO:

- Practice Social Distancing
- Avoid Large Crowds
- Wear a Mask
- Carefully Wash Our Hands
- Avoid Touching Our Face

VACCINES AND TREATMENTS

Scientists are very early in the development of vaccines and treatments for Covid-19. All of these need to be tested for safety and effectiveness. If vaccines or treatments reach the stage of widespread use, they will have gone through extensive testing and will be safe with manageable side effects. As with other recommended vaccines, there will be no relationship between their use and the symptoms or development of autism spectrum disorder. But all of these will require care by a physician to counsel patients and their loved ones about which of these are appropriate for you.

*Alternative, non-prescribed treatments at this time are neither tested nor effective and may cause harm to those who try them.*