

Memo

To: Palliative Manitoba staff and volunteers
From: Jennifer Gurke, Executive Director
Date: March 12, 2020
Re: Corona virus (COVID-19)

Palliative Manitoba is aware that the corona virus (covid-19) is spreading and we want to ensure that our staff, volunteers and individuals we support are at minimal risk.

We continue to monitor the situation and will keep everyone apprised of the situation as new information becomes available. Palliative Manitoba will use information available from Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, Manitoba Health, Seniors and Active Living; the Public Health Agency of Canada and the World Health Organization to guide our decisions in this area.

Currently, Palliative Manitoba will continue to offer our education, grief seminars and volunteer visiting in homes and in the hospital. We will monitor the situation daily and inform you if we decide to cancel any of our programming. We are in contact with our service partners (funeral homes, WRHA) to ensure precautions are in place to minimize the risk of infection/contamination.

Please remember the following strategies to reduce the risk of transmission:

1. Hand hygiene

Practice proper hand-hygiene frequently. Wash your hands with soap and water OR with alcoholic solutions, gels or tissues to maintain clean hands and fingernails. It should be performed frequently with soap and water for at least 15-20 seconds:

- Before and after preparing food
- Before and after eating

- After using the toilet
- After coughing/sneezing into a tissue (or if non-compliant with respiratory etiquette)
- Before and after using a surgical/procedure mask and after removing gloves
- After handling body fluid contaminated waste or laundry
- Whenever hands look dirty

If soap and water are not available, hands can be cleaned with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol, ensuring that all surfaces of hands are covered and rubbed together until they feel dry. For visibly soiled hands, soiling should be removed with an alcohol-based wipe first, followed by use of an alcohol-based sanitizer.

Touching one's eye, nose and mouth with unwashed hands should be avoided.

2. Respiratory Etiquette

Describes a combination of measures intended to minimize the dispersion of large particle respiratory droplets when an ill person is coughing, sneezing and talking to reduce virus transmissions.

- Cover coughs and sneezes with a surgical/procedural mask or tissue. Dispose of tissue in a lined waste container and perform hand hygiene immediately after a cough or a sneeze OR
- Cough or sneeze into the bend of your arm, NOT your hand.

3. Cleaning

Surfaces (e.g. desks and tables) and objects (e.g. telephones, keyboards) need to be wiped with disinfectant regularly.

4. Stay at home

Anyone with even a mild cough or low-grade fever (37.3 C or more) needs to stay at home. You should also stay home (or work from home) if you have had to take simple medications, such as paracetamol/acetaminophen, ibuprofen or aspirin, which may mask

symptoms of infection. For staff, this will count as sick time off. For volunteers, this will NOT affect your volunteer status with Palliative Manitoba.

If you are uncomfortable attending individuals' homes, hospitals, long term care facilities, do not attend. This will not affect your employment or volunteer status with Palliative Manitoba.

5. Social Distancing

If you are in public, maintain 1 meter (3 feet) of distance from others as much as possible. Avoid direct human contact.

For further information, please see:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection.html>

<https://www.gov.mb.ca/health/coronavirus/index.html>

If you suspect you have a case of COVID, contact Health Links: (204)-788-8200 /1-888-315-9257.

Thank you,
Jennifer Gurke
Executive Director