



## MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

August 2020

### **FITNESS FOCUS**

#### **GET OUTSIDE!**

#### **Take A Break**

#### **From Coronavirus Stress**

We are inundated with information about SARS CoV-2 - the virus that causes COVID-19. It is hard to know what sources to trust. This uncertainty causes both conscious and unconscious stress. This stress can cause a host of health-related complications. So...how can a person take care of themselves in these stressful times?

A great way to manage the pervasive coronavirus stress is by spending more time outside - especially if you go outside without your phone or access to social media or news. Happily, there is evidence that sunlight kills the virus. Sadly, heat alone does not appear to affect the virus.

With this information in mind, think about ways to enjoy more fully your favorite outdoor spots while still keeping your distance from others outside your household. Be alert to factors that may reduce your ability to keep physical distance from others, even when outdoors. For instance, alcohol consumption in social groups may lead to a relaxing of your physical distancing boundaries.

A helpful strategy in any group situation is to intentionally partner with a friend to help one another maintain the COVID-19 protection measures you have determined to follow - like wearing a mask and physical distancing. Keep working together, Wyoming. (mdt)

### **HEALTH TIP**



### **COVID-19 AND COMORBIDITIES**

We hear many references in the news about the role of "comorbidities" in COVID-positive patients. Specifically, we hear about the role of comorbidities leading to high rates of hospitalizations and even deaths.

Comorbidities are disease processes - usually chronic diseases - that make a patient either a) more susceptible to catching an infection or b) more susceptible to having a severe outcome to an infection.

The following conditions ARE comorbidities for more severe COVID infections:

- \* Cancer
- \* COPD
- \* Obesity
- \* Sickle cell disease
- \* Chronic Kidney Disease
- \* Immunocompromised
- \* Serious heart conditions
- \* Diabetes

Patients with the following conditions MIGHT be at increased risk (partial list):

- \* Asthma
- \* Hypertension
- \* TIA / Strokes
- \* Liver Disease
- \* Cystic Fibrosis
- \* Pregnancy

To read more on this topic, please read the article "*People With Certain Medical Conditions*" ([SEE HERE](#)) published under the COVID-19 section of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website with links to specifics about each disease. Please contact your doctor if you have any questions or concerns specific to your unique health situation. (dwb)



### **DOCTOR'S NOTE**

### **DISTURBING THOUGHTS**

By Dean Bartholomew, M.D.

The pandemic has obviously been trying for our nation with the stress bringing out the best and the worst in humanity. As healthcare workers, we approach the pandemic likely from a different angle than the general population. With that said, I understand the concerns about the infringement on constitutional rights, concerns about unfair closures of church gatherings when bars and casinos are left open and protest gatherings allowed. I also understand that the financial burden has to be weighed against the healthcare burden.

On a personal level though, I am disturbed by the opinions I have seen on social media that the deaths of nearly 150,000 people should be discounted because of comorbidities. In fact, a local post said Wyoming's death count should be considered "0" because the 26 people who have died with COVID-19 all had comorbidities.

Huh? Having a health problem does not suddenly make a person's life unworthy of being lived or counted. Ethical medical care delivery does not pick winners and losers. Take a look above at the list of comorbid conditions. This list is not restricted to octogenarians in the nursing home. Just take diabetes and obesity...9.1% of the adult American population has diabetes ([SEE HERE](#)) and 42.4% are considered obese. ([SEE HERE](#))

Should we write off nearly half of American adults? No. We are Americans and we take care of each other!

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**BETTER ACCESS = BETTER CARE.**

**PRACTICE NEWS**

**PHYSICAL DISTANCING IN THE WAITING ROOM**

Operational changes have been made in many businesses as a result of the pandemic. A few months ago, restaurants were only allowed to have curbside pickup. Some stores in other cities count and limit the number of people allowed in the building at one time. Here at 307Health, we considered getting some physical distancing stickers for our waiting area, but realized our space will only allow for six-feet of separation for a very low number of people.

As a result of this insight, we started offering our own curbside pickup for medications and any other items needing to be picked-up. While we are not as busy as a restaurant, it does not take too many people stopping in at the same time to exceed the recommended physical distancing in our small waiting room. We continue to encourage members to call us on arrival so we can get you back to your exam room as efficiently as possible. We also ask you to call when you are out front to pick up a medication so it may be brought out to you efficiently. Some form of this service will continue even after the pandemic is a memory. For example, if you have cold symptoms or do not otherwise feel well, it would be better for you to have us bring your medication order out to you.

If you have made it this far into this article, you will have noticed we are using the term “physical distancing” instead of “social distancing”. This is an intentional change. For the past five years, our waiting room at 307Health has been a place of warm social interaction. We look forward to the day when it can once again be a social place. In the meantime, let us do our best as a community to minimize the spread of COVID-19 in the Bighorn Basin! (mdt)

**2020 FLU SHOTS – WATCH FOR INFO IN SEPTEMBER**

Flu shot clinic information will be published in our September newsletter. (krt)



**MEMBER SERVICES FOCUS**

**COVID-19 SELF-DIRECTED TESTING INFORMATION**

Self-directed COVID-19 testing programs are available in some locations for individuals wanting to get tested for the new coronavirus without a prescription or order from their doctor. There are two local self-directed COVID-19 testing programs from which to choose if you are seeking testing.

**Powell Valley Healthcare (PVHC)** offers drive-through testing for asymptomatic persons in the Powell Valley Clinic parking lot from 8 to 10 a.m. Monday through Friday. PVHC is currently limiting tests to 40 per day, so testing will close early on any given day once 40 tests are collected. The cost is \$20 and is payable by cash or credit or debit card only – checks are not accepted. Test results are typically available to the customer within 24 hours. The last day of the PVHC drive-up testing program is reported to be scheduled for August 14, 2020.

**Cody Regional Health (CRH)** offers COVID-19 asymptomatic testing at a tent between the Buffalo Bill Center of the West and CRH from 8 to 11 a.m. Monday through Friday. CRH is limiting tests to 45 per day. The cost is \$25 payable by check or credit card only. Cash is not accepted. Results are typically available within 24 to 72 hours.

Please be aware that self-directed tests are typically reserved for persons with no illness symptoms. Persons experiencing illness symptoms may be required to be seen by a medical provider – in the medical clinic, the urgent care clinic or the hospital's emergency department. Please contact your medical care provider for further instruction if you have symptoms and think you may need COVID-19 testing.

For more information about local COVID-19 testing options, see this June 16 Powell Tribune article [HERE](#). A helpful overview of COVID testing by the United States Centers For Disease Control and Prevention can be found [HERE](#). (rlc)

**COVID INFORMATION And RESOURCES**

**PARK CO. COVID-19 UPDATE**

**New Guidelines on Contact Tracing from the Wyoming Department of Health**

By Dr. Aaron Billin, Park County Health Officer  
July 28, 2020 – Facebook Post

For most persons with COVID-19 illness, isolation and precautions can be discontinued 10 days after symptom onset AND resolution of fever for at least 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing medications, AND with improvement of other symptoms.

A limited number of persons with severe illness may produce replication-competent virus beyond 10 days, warranting extending the duration of isolation and precautions for up to 20 days after symptom onset. CDC does not provide a definition of severe illness. The Wyoming Department of Health (WDH) recommends consultation with public health officials in any individual who may have severe illness requiring a longer duration of isolation.

For persons who never develop symptoms, isolation and other precautions can be discontinued 10 days after the date of collection of their first positive RT-PCR test for SARS-CoV-2.

Retesting is not recommended within 90 days after recovery from COVID-19 as the test is likely to be positive. This is because the sensitive PCR tests are most likely detecting fragments of viral RNA and not necessarily intact virus. For this reason, requiring a negative test before return to work can cause unnecessary delays, and should not be done. Although antibodies to SARS-CoV-2 wane quickly, no person in the US has been documented to become reinfected after recovery.

Visit [HERE](#) to view Park County's COVID-19 infection data as of June 29, 2020.