

WHAT WE ARE DOING

Southwest Health System continues actively monitoring developments of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) as the health of our patients, guests, team members, and the community is our paramount focus, a responsibility we take very seriously.

We are testing individuals for COVID-19 now and are prepared in the event we have a positive test.

Coronavirus Testing Criteria

The criteria to be tested are:

- Cough PLUS fever more than 101° or shortness of breath **AND**
- Age 65+ with a compromised immune system **OR**
- Contact with a confirmed/suspected case of COVID-19 **OR**
- Traveled to an area with widespread, ongoing transmission

Testing for COVID-19 requires two swabs – one nasal and one oral (from the back of the throat like a strep test) to be properly tested at an off-site lab.

The Coronavirus starts with a fever, followed by a dry cough and then a week after that, shortness of breath. If you meet the criteria and have concerns, **please call us at 601-249-3627 before coming to any of our locations.**

New Health System Visitor Protocols

We ask you to please limit visitation to our facilities unless absolutely necessary, in order to protect our patients, guests, clinicians, and all staff, as well as our community.

In most cases, we must limit to one visitor or caregiver who is essential for the clinical evaluation of the patient and receiving post-care instructions.

Visitors to the Health System are now being screened with a series of questions before being allowed into our facilities. Visitation hours are currently 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. (this may change daily). Visitation is limited to one visitor per patient at a time.

Access to the hospital will be limited to:

- Main lobby entrance
- Emergency Room entrance
- Cardiovascular Center lobby entrance

It is important to note that you are more likely to catch COVID-19 in a large public setting than at one of our facilities, as we have strict infection control protocols in place to ensure the highest level of safety for our employees, our patients and our community.

These visitation protocols are in place to prevent unnecessary person-to-person contact transfers, for the protection of the patients and staff.

Protecting Seniors

Southwest urges those at the highest risk that are older members of our community with other chronic diseases to avoid unnecessary contact with large groups of people or individuals who may have been exposed to contagious illnesses.

Stay Informed with Southwest MS Health System

If you have symptoms of cough and fever less than 101° we suggest you **STAY AT HOME**.

We encourage the community to seek factual information about COVID-19 and not fall to rumors or fiction.

Remember Coronavirus is spread from those who are actively sick with it: someone with fever, cough, and difficulty breathing. It is most commonly spread from an infected person who sneezes, or coughs and their respiratory droplets are transferred into another person's mouth or nasal passages. Those droplets are easily transferred when someone is within six feet of the infected person, or sometimes when they touch a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touch their own mouth or nose.

What else can you do to help?

1. We can all work to **avoid the spread of the virus**. If you know someone who has a fever and minor flu-like symptoms, ask them to stay home and call us at **601-249-3627**. Here is a great **one-pager from CDC**, note the first thing it says – “Stay Home!”
2. For those who are not working, such as college students and anyone else available, if they know someone who works in healthcare, please offer to help **babysit their children** who are out of school. By healthcare workers being able to go to work, they can best help our community.
3. It seems to be said over and over but it bears repeating: **wash your hands**, avoid touching your nose and mouth, avoid contact with sick people, cough or sneeze into your elbow or use a tissue, clean and disinfect any frequently touched objects and surfaces.
4. Share with people that it is not too late to **get the flu shot**. This protects others from the flu, avoids causing clog to the system for people that might actually get the Coronavirus and need treatment or testing, and it keeps the at-risk community of elderly and chronically-ill people safer.