

Updated May 26, 2020

The novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is a global, national and local concern. We want to assure our community that The University of Kansas Health System is working closely with local, state and federal health officials to control spread and provide needed care while continuing to safely meet the primary, specialty and emergency healthcare needs of our patients and their families.

Our top priority is keeping our patients, visitors and staff safe.

Our team treats patients with several respiratory illnesses every day. We have the training, tools and techniques in place to isolate and care for patients who are potentially at risk for COVID-19.

We have put into place a variety of process changes to optimize safety and minimize risk so our patients can confidently plan and receive the important care they need.

Committed to safety

We are scheduling and seeing patients for primary and specialty care needs. Your safety is always our most important priority. We changed some of our processes – including routinely conducting COVID-19 screening and testing for surgical and hospitalized patients – to optimize safety and minimize risk for patients and staff. Learn more about these practices to prepare for your visit.

Guidelines for visiting Pawnee Valley

Campus

To protect our patients, visitors and staff from infection, we have implemented the following guidelines:

TEMPERATURE SCREENINGS

We have implemented temperature screenings upon entry into our facilities. We have reduced points of entry at some locations to direct all arriving visitors to a screening station where someone will take your temperature. This includes health system employees. Every person arriving at our facilities must receive a temperature screening before entering.

VISITATION CHANGES

*Effective Wednesday, May 27 at 6:00 a.m.

*One visitor per patient per day will be allowed from 8:00 am – 8:00 pm. No visitors will be allowed to enter after 8:00 pm.

VISITATION REMINDERS

*Patients and visitors must use the Front Entrance, M-F from 6:00 am – 5:00 pm for access. Evenings until 8:00 pm and weekends from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm, patients and visitors must use the After Hour Entrance.

* Only emergency room patients and visitors enter through the Emergency Department entrance, open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

*Unless you have a scheduled pediatrics appointment, visitors under age 14 will not be allowed in the facilities until further notice.

* Temperature screenings upon entry into our facilities will continue. When you enter the hospital, you will be directed to a screening station where someone will take your temperature. This process will include health system employees. Every person arriving at our facilities must receive a temperature screening before entering. Visitors and staff with a temperature will not be allowed in the facility.

Masks required for patients, visitors and staff

As we work together to preserve health and safety for our health system and communities, we require all patients, visitors and staff to wear masks. It's a necessity of our new normal that certainly feels different, but guidelines from the CDC indicate wearing a barrier mask provides a measure of protection for all of us.

If you're hesitant, please remember: "When you wear a mask, you protect others. When I wear a mask, I protect you."

We're commonly asked the following questions, and we hope the responses help everyone understand the value of wearing masks to protect each other.

- **I'm healthy. Why do I need to wear a mask?**

It's possible to have COVID-19 without having symptoms. Masks help prevent germs from traveling far enough to infect others, especially those at high risk. If you wear a mask, you

protect others from germs you do not even know you have. When others wear masks, they protect you the same way.

- **A few months ago, healthy people didn't need to wear masks. What changed?**

CDC guidance changed based on research about the high probability of asymptomatic transmission – that is, transmission of COVID-19 by people who aren't even aware they're infected. We have aligned our policy to meet these guidelines. Wearing a cloth mask is not foolproof, but if someone is infected and does not know it, the mask prevents their breath from traveling far and potentially infecting others.

- **What is asymptomatic transmission?**

Asymptomatic transmission refers to transmission of the virus by a person who does not develop symptoms.

- **I have a health condition and wearing a mask makes it hard to breathe. Do I still need to wear it?**

Please let our staff know of your condition. To protect others, maintain at least 6 feet of physical distance around yourself, wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer, and cover your cough and sneeze into your elbow.

- **I often see people not wearing masks. Why aren't they?**

Some people may have health issues that make it difficult to wear masks. These people in particular have been asked to maintain 6 feet of physical distancing. We require everyone who is able to wear a mask to do so in our facilities.

- **Who is not required to wear a mask?**

Masks should not be placed on children younger than 2 years of age, anyone who has trouble breathing, or anyone who is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the cover without assistance.

- **How do I use a mask properly?**

The mask should cover your nose and chin. It should fit snugly but comfortably and should not restrict your breathing. It should be secured with ear loops or ties. You should handle the mask only by the ear loops or ties when removing and should be careful not to touch your eyes, nose, mouth, or face while removing. Cloth masks should be laundered between uses.

- **Where can I find more information on masks and COVID-19 in general?**

Visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website for the latest information and recommendations.

Pawnee Valley Medical Associates

Telehealth Visits

Appointments for routine and chronic needs are important appointments. Don't delay in obtaining the care you need. For efficiency and convenience, you can connect with your provider electronically in a telehealth clinic visit. Telehealth, or virtual visits, provide a safe, convenient, high quality care in the comfort of your home. There are two types of virtual visits; one is conducted using the telephone and the other is a video visit that uses your home computer or a mobile device such as a laptop, smartphone or tablet with a camera and speaker. Call your healthcare provider today at 620-285-8600 for more information or to schedule an appointment.

Take good care

Following several simple practices will help you and your loved ones reduce risk of infection. But if you or someone close to you does feel ill, it's important to recognize symptoms and seek care responsibly.

If you think you have COVID-19, do not go to the Emergency Department unless instructed by your doctor.

Maintaining your health

Your overall health remains important even amid this outbreak.

Physical Distancing

Dana Hawkinson, MD, Infection Control and Prevention and Steve Stites, MD, Chief Medical Officer, at The University of Kansas Health System talk about staying safe.

Dr. Stites: Johnson County announced there is evidence of person-to-person spread inside the county. This is known as community spread. It means that our emphasis is shifting from containment to mitigation. Dr. Hawkinson takes a moment and tells us a little bit about what mitigation means.

Dr. Hawkinson: Mitigation means we are trying to significantly reduce the spread in the community from one person to another, to minimize the number infected, and the number of people who need intensive care services for severe disease.

Dr. Stites: So, can you stay safe?

Dr. Hawkinson: Yes, the majority of these infections are mild and you will not need to receive medical care. Eighty-percent of people will have mild symptoms you can manage at home with typical home remedies, such as a fever reducer like Tylenol, fluids and rest. If you feel your symptoms are worsening, such as progressive shortness of breath or other breathing problems, please call your primary care provider or 911, if you feel like it's an emergency.

Please do not show up at your doctor's office, the hospital, or even the emergency room as you could potentially infect others in the waiting room. Call ahead so you can be efficiently greeted and moved to the proper area for evaluation and treatment.

Dr. Stites: So, if 80% of people stay home and only 20% of people come into the hospital, what percentage of folks need critical care?

Dr. Hawkinson: It's even a smaller percentage than 20% needing critical care.

The highest risk factors for developing severe and critical disease include older age above 50, and even more, those above 70 years old. Also, other significant risk factors include heart disease, diabetes, lung disease, and other immune compromising conditions.

This is why we need to mitigate the spread as much as possible and social distancing is vital to that.

Dr. Stites: Like many things in life that are worth doing, social distancing takes commitment. And the commitment each of you need to make is to stay home. Stay home and stay safe. Stay isolated in your home and do not gather in groups of more than ten. And honestly, smaller is even better.

The best thing you can do is wash your hands. Don't touch your face. Keep your distance. Stay home.

If you feel like you have a fever, a shortness of breath, or cough, call your doctor. All hospitals are able to care successfully for patients with COVID-19 and together, with each of you taking care of your family and yourselves, with all the health professionals at all our hospitals taking care of you, we can beat coronavirus.

This is important. The disease cannot spread if you're not around people who have it. Stay home. Stay Safe.

Managing COVID at home

Many people with the COVID-19 virus will be able to recover at home. Below are guidelines on how to keep your environment clean and safe during home isolation.

The basics to care for yourself or loved ones at home

The University of Kansas Health System and the University of Kansas Medical Center care about the community in and out of the hospital. If you or a loved one is sick with the coronavirus, this video will provide a brief review of important points about home care. Separate the individual who is sick from other people and animals in the home. They should stay in a room by themselves and use a separate bathroom if available. A bedroom or room with a door is best. Use the guidelines of the state or local health department for when it's okay to stop home isolation as these guidelines are subject to change. It's important to clean surfaces that you touch a lot, such as tables, door knobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets and faucets. Clean all of these surfaces that are touched often every day using household cleaning sprays or wipes.

If using a household bleach solution, dilute the bleach using the instructions on the bottle. Make sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions for application and proper ventilation. If possible, place a trashcan with a trash bag in the room of the person who is sick with COVID-19. Use gloves when removing garbage bags and handling the trash. Wash your hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds afterwards. For laundry, wear gloves. Again, washing your hands as soon as you remove the gloves.

Do not shake out dirty laundry before washing. You can use a trash bag to line the laundry bins or clean and disinfect after use. Use the hottest water setting and ensure all items are completely dry. We understand not every home will have disposable gloves or medical masks. The priority is to wash your hands for at least 20 seconds. If available, you can use disposable gloves. Remember to always wash your hands after taking off gloves. If you'll be in close quarters with someone who is sick and you do not have a mask available, you can use a homemade mask such as a bandana or scarf, completely covering the nose and mouth.

When preparing food, consider things like dishes, utensils, and napkins as something that could also spread infection. If possible, use paper plates, plastic forks and spoons that can be thrown away after use. If paper plates are not available, transfer used dishes straight to a sink filled with warm soapy water to be washed. Then if available, place for sanitizing in a dishwasher. Grocery, medication and prepared food delivery are options in many communities. You could also ask a neighbor or family member for a pickup and drop off. When placing orders simply request items are left at an easily accessible place such as your front porch to minimize contact with others.

When you bring food into your house, immediately throw away the bag or other packaging materials. Disinfect the surfaces that the food came into contact with and clean your hands before eating or serving food. Seek medical attention immediately if you or your loved one have any of the following warning signs including trouble breathing, chest pain or pressure, new confusion like answering questions wrong, or difficulty waking up, bluish lips or face. This list doesn't include all of the symptoms. If you or your loved one is having other concerning symptoms, please consult your medical provider right away. Or it felt to be an emergency, call 911. Thank you and take care.

Managing anxiety during a time of crisis

Times of uncertainty can trigger feelings of anxiousness, concern and confusion. Greg Nawalanic, PsyD, clinical director of psychology services at The University of Kansas Health System Strawberry Hill Campus, shares ways of reducing anxiety and improving
March 19, 2020

For many people, times of uncertainty can trigger feelings of anxiousness, concern and confusion. Greg Nawalanic, Psy-D, clinical director of psychology services at The University of Kansas Health System Strawberry Hill Campus, shares his tips for reducing anxiety and improving overall mental health.

During critical times, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, it's important to:

- Acknowledge your anxiety: It's completely normal to feel the strain of the unknown. Anxiety can actually increase in response to one's efforts to ignore or repress it. When you feel the next wave of anxiety coming on, try to acknowledge it and accept it as a reasonable part of the experience. Interestingly, the more you are able to face the anxious feelings in the moment, the less anxiety you will feel over time.

- Stay informed without going overboard: Consuming too much news can be a trigger for anxiety. Try limiting yourself to a half hour of reading or watching each day. Through this small change, you can become more effective in completing your daily tasks and staying present in your relationships. You can reduce your anxiety while still remaining properly informed.
- Exercise personal responsibility: In times of a crisis like this, it's important to adhere to guidelines and suggestions from infectious disease experts. By doing this, you gain a sense of control over the unknown, which is often a trigger for anxiety and emotion-driven reactions.

To reduce stress and anxiety, try incorporating these activities into your daily routine:

- Shift your focus. Rather than focusing on what you cannot control, try looking at setbacks as opportunities for growth and self-discovery. Crack open a good book, watch a new TV show, draw, paint, learn to play a new instrument or engage in an activity you've always wanted to try.
- Exercise. Getting outside and going for a walk, run or bike ride is one of the best ways to reduce anxiety. Exercise releases the "feel-good" chemicals in your body and can help support a healthy immune response.
- Breathe. You don't have to be a yogi to experience the benefits of turning down the noise in your life. Try doing some deep breathing or meditation exercises for 5-10 minutes first thing in the morning and set an intention for the day. In the evening, do the same thing, and use that time to reflect on your growth.
- Eat well. During stressful times, research shows we tend to reach for comfort foods, which can often make us feel worse. Instead, try incorporating lean meats or fish, fruits and vegetables into your diet.
- Sleep. Getting a good night's sleep can be a challenge for people with anxiety. Avoid watching TV or looking at your cell phone an hour before your intended bedtime. Instead, try listening to relaxing music, read a book or meditate.

If you are having trouble with anxiety and depression, talk to your healthcare provider.

COVID-19 Hotline 877-261-7140