



SALEM MEDICAL CENTER

The Salem Medical Center staff are prepared to evaluate and care for patients who may be infected with COVID-19 disease, while taking every possible precaution to ensure the health and safety of our staff, patients and their families.

Coronaviruses are a family of viruses that can cause illnesses ranging from the common cold to severe acute respiratory syndrome. The current virus that is circulating is named COVID-19. The purpose of this memo is to reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19, influenza, and other respiratory illnesses.

As of today, March 17, 2020, we at Salem Medical Center have no evidence of COVID-19 among our staff or patients. Salem Medical Center will continue to provide updates as warranted.

Symptoms

Symptoms of these respiratory illnesses include fever (100.4 or greater), runny nose, congestion, cough, sore throat, and shortness of breath. Symptoms can range from mild to severe. People at the greatest risk are those over the age of 60 or who have pre-existing medical conditions, such as heart disease, diabetes and respiratory issues.

Transmission

COVID-19 is spread between people who are in close contact with one another (within 6 feet). It is believed that it is spread through respiratory droplets released when someone with the virus coughs or sneezes.

Risk Factors

People are at risk if they have recently traveled from an affected geographical area determined by the CDC or have been in contact with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19.

Prevention

There is no vaccine for COVID-19, but we can take steps to reduce the risk of transmission. The CDC recommends the following steps to reduce the risk of transmission:

To Protect Yourself:

- Wash hands often with soap and water, for at least 20 seconds, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer and cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they are dry
- Avoid close contact with sick people

Steps to Protect Others:

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your elbow when sneezing or coughing and dispose of the tissue immediately
- Avoid those that are sick
- Wear a facemask if you are sick
- Disinfect surfaces that are touched often
- Stay at home from work or public places when sick

The CDC does not recommend that healthy people wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory illnesses.

What is Salem Medical Center doing to reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19?

Temporary Visitor Restrictions:

- No hospital Visitors will be allowed until further notice.
- Limited exceptions include:
 - Patients in hospice or end-of-life care
 - One visitor/support person for pediatric patients
 - One visitor/support person for maternity
 - One visitor/support person for an individual undergoing same-day surgery or an ambulatory procedure.

(Visitors who meet these exceptions will be screened for symptoms before being allowed to visit.)

Coordinating with Public Health Officials

SMC is coordinating with public health officials at the county and state level to monitor the spread of the virus. The health department is providing guidance and monitoring of quarantined individuals throughout the state.

- State of NJ has a COVID-19 Hotline to answer questions from the public: **1-800-222-1222**.

Signage Throughout the Facility

- Cough Etiquette
- Hand hygiene

Education of Employees

- General education on COVID-19
- Hand hygiene education
- Appropriate use of Personal Protection Equipment based on risk assessment
- Putting on and removing PPE

Department Specific Infection Prevention Guidance

Salem Medical Center has established internal guidance for assessing and handling patients that may have symptoms of COVID-19. Department specific guidance will be distributed and will be available on the SMC Intranet. Individual departments should not develop or implement their own guidance, unless approved by administration. Following the established guidance ensures the safety of our patients, visitors and staff.

Monitoring Supplies of PPE

Due to the global impact of COVID-19, SMC is continuously monitoring the availability of PPE.

Regards,

Tammy Torres, DNP, MSN, RN
Chief Executive Officer

