



A Message from Robert T. Braithwaite, president and CEO of Hoag Memorial Hospital Presbyterian

These are unprecedented times for America and the world. Together we are confronting the COVID-19 pandemic and it is more important than ever to take care of one another and be diligent and wise in our daily activities. A critically important part of that means adhering, unequivocally, to the behavioral and infection prevention guidelines that have been strongly recommended by the nation's health care experts.

I wanted to take this opportunity to reassure you that, at Hoag, we take our role as your trusted health care partner to heart. It is certain that our nation -- Orange County included -- will experience more cases of infection in the days and weeks ahead. Hoag has exceptional physicians and nurses, including an outstanding Infection Prevention team leading our comprehensive efforts.

Over the past few days, many of our physicians and nurses have been asked for advice and counsel in this challenging time. ***And as I noted at the beginning of this letter, the advice and counsel we have provided are more than mere suggestions. Handwashing. Social Distancing and Isolation. Community Thinking.*** These are extremely important, actionable instructions that we all must follow in order to prevent the continued spread of this disease. They are especially important for the most vulnerable in our communities - our seniors and those who have chronic medical conditions.

While much of the information that follows may already be familiar to you, I encourage you to review and apply it with great care and diligence. Even if you don't fall within the specific parameters of what is considered the high-risk population with this virus, the guidelines and tips it contains can play a critical role in keeping you -- and your loved ones, friends and neighbors -- healthy during this challenging time.

Directives for High Risk Populations

We have learned by watching the evolution of this disease that it is of the utmost importance for those at higher risk - adults 65+ and those with chronic medical conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, lung disease and conditions that render a patient to be immune-compromised - to abide by the guidelines set forth by medical professionals. In fact, California's Governor Gavin Newsom just announced yesterday that seniors should isolate themselves to limit their exposure to the virus.

To assist those at higher risk, we have compiled the below information and resources from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Highly Recommended Actions You Can Take to Reduce your Risk

- **Stay home** as much as possible to further reduce your risk of being exposed.
- **Take everyday precautions** to keep space between yourself and others (ideally 6+ feet).
 - Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
 - When you go out in public, keep away from others who are sick, limit close contact and wash your hands often.
- **Avoid crowds and large gatherings**, especially in poorly ventilated spaces.
- **Wash your hands often** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing, or having been in a public place.
 - If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
 - **To the extent possible, avoid touching high-touch surfaces in public places** – elevator buttons, door handles, handrails, handshaking with people, etc. Use a tissue or your sleeve to cover your hand or finger if you must touch something. Wash your hands after touching surfaces in public places.
- **Avoid touching your face** (nose, eyes and mouth). This is not easy to do. The average person will touch their face about 20 times each hour. Your eyes, nose and mouth are primary access points for viruses.
- **Clean and disinfect** your home to remove germs: practice routine cleaning of frequently touched surfaces (for example: tables, doorknobs, light switches, handles, desks, toilets, faucets, sinks & cell phones)
- **Avoid all non-essential travel.**
- **If you have cold or flu like symptoms, please consult your physician by phone first** before any upcoming appointment in order to limit the spread of illness.

Tips for Families and Caregivers

Those who care for older adults can take steps to ensure their needs are met while staying safe.

- Know what medications your loved one is taking and see if you can help them have extra on hand.
- Monitor food and other medical supplies (oxygen, incontinence, dialysis, wound care) needed and create a back-up plan.
- If you care for a loved one living in a care facility, monitor the situation, and ask about the health of the other residents frequently.

If You Want To Visit a Loved One in Our Hospitals

While family members and friends are vital to the well-being and recovery of our patients, it's essential that we balance the needs of patients and their families while maintaining the safest, most secure environment for all patients, treating clinicians, staff and visitors. Therefore, out of an abundance of caution and consistent with Governor Newsom's directive yesterday, we are updating our patient and visitor guidelines amid the COVID-19 concerns, to ensure we limit further spread and keep you and your loved ones safe.

Effective today, Monday, March 16th, Hoag will enforce a "No Visitor" policy at our

hospitals, consistent with the directive from Governor Newsom. There will be a few exceptions:

- **Patients who may be facing end of life** – We will work with families to ensure that they are able to be with their family member.
- **Maternity Patients** – For new mothers laboring and delivering, they will be allowed *one* significant other to be with them throughout their stay.
- **Neonatal Intensive Care Patients** – Parents with an infant in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit will be allowed to be with their infant, *one* parent at a time.
- **Patients who require assistance** – *One* parent or guardian can accompany minors and individuals with special needs.
- **Patients Having Emergent Procedures** – Patients that may need an emergent procedure (e.g., Cardiac Catheterization) will be allowed *one* support person.

There is a lot of misinformation and understandable concern about COVID-19. For the very latest facts, we encourage everyone to visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) website for COVID-19. Please know that Hoag will be with the community every step of the way. Our commitment to you is that we will continue to share important guidelines, practices and critical updates as the situation evolves, to both keep you informed and keep you well.

Sincerely,

Robert T. Braithwaite

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President and Chief Executive Officer

CDC COVID-19 Information

Hoag COVID-19 Website



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