

Dear SNA patients and friends,

At this time, Sleep and Neuroscience Associates (SNA) will remain open to continue to provide a high level of service to our patients and the community.

We are, however, asking patients and staff to adhere to the CDC guidelines which are aimed at protecting the general public from community transmission of COVID-19. By the nature of sleep medicine practice, fortunately our patients are not acutely ill and therefore are less likely to be exposed to COVID-19 at SNA than they would be at other healthcare facilities.

*First and foremost, staff or patients who are sick with any fever or respiratory symptoms, cough, shortness of breath, or any flu-like symptoms should stay home.*

We have asked that staff and our patients use measures to minimize risk of asymptomatic disease spread in the office:

1- Wash hands with soap and water frequently. Wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds after each and every contact with a provider. Hand sanitizer is to be used as a “backup” when a sink is not immediately available. The same “20 second rule” applies to hand sanitizer.

2- Avoid handshakes, hugs, or other close contact with others except when necessary.

3- Cover your cough, into your elbow, for example (though a frequent or persistent cough would be an indication to stay home!).

4- Wipe down all surfaces in patient rooms between every patient encounter.

At check-in, staff will ask patients, “Have you been sick in the past week or have you been in close contact with anyone sick in the past week?” If the answer is yes, maybe or “not sure”, we will reschedule their appointment.

We emphasize that COVID-19 is a new disease and we are still learning how it spreads, the severity of illness it causes, and to what extent it may spread in the United States. Some general information:

The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person.

- Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
- Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.

Can someone spread the virus without being sick?

- People are thought to be most contagious when they are most symptomatic (the sickest).
- *Some spread might be possible before people show symptoms; there have been reports of this occurring with this new coronavirus, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.*

Spread from contact with contaminated surfaces or objects:

It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, *but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.*

For more information, the CDC website is an excellent resource:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/index.html>

This is a quickly-changing and evolving situation so stay tuned for any ongoing updates or changes in SNA policy regarding COVID-19.

Thank you,

Dr Samit Malhotra.