INTRODUCTION:

The CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) has a website (Click) *What to Do If You Are Sick*, *if you have possible or confirmed C0V-19*. This is very good for isolation procedures and when to seek medical attention. It does not provide a thorough pulmonary regimen.

Ill people with COVID-19 are being told stay home and treat themselves symptomatically if their illness is not severe enough to require the emergency room. The purpose of this sheet is to help you do that. Certainly, symptoms such as significant shortness of breath on exertion (such as walking to the bathroom), severe chest pain, or bluish lips (which can indicate low oxygen levels in your blood) requires emergency care. If you can be in touch with a medical provider, that is excellent. It is now becoming possible to make contact via telemedicine. Keep an active medication list and known medication allergies.

We can all benefit from a written self-care protocol to follow. This does not replace having a medical provider following you. It is a reminder of the important steps that you can take to help your healing. If you have an underlying medical condition such as asthma, diabetes, congestive heart failure, lung disease or kidney disease, you must be under the care of a medical provider.

In the very early stages of a COVID-19 infection the most common clinical features are fever, fatigue, dry cough, loss of appetite and achiness. Upper respiratory symptoms are less common. Simple early measures taken at home, which work for most bronchial infections, will make you more comfortable. If you can keep your body and lungs healthier, there is the possibility it may help you mount a stronger challenge to this virus. These measures have no side effects, so there is no downside to following them.

Although there are no controlled studies showing the effectiveness of steam, steam treatments may be very helpful and healing. It loosens mucus and will help nasal congestion and a sore throat. We use soaking in warm water or warm compresses for skin infections; it increases the metabolism in the area where the heat is applied.

PATIENT PROTOCOL:

1. **Rest and Stay at Home.**
2. **Stay Hydrated.** Drink 6-8 glasses fluids daily-juice, water, soups. Avoid alcohol. Fluids keep you healthier and thin your pulmonary secretions. Your urine should be colorless or a very light yellow. If the urine is becoming darker, you are getting dehydrated.
3. **Steam inhalations.** Steam four times daily for 10-15 minutes each time. Do not stand over a stove since you do not want to burn yourself.

   **Ways to get steam:**
   - A facial steamer is simple.
   - A hot water vaporizer
   - You can sit at the sink and put on the hot water. Put a towel over your head to capture the steam.
   - You can sit in the bathroom with the hot shower on. You do not want to stand for a long time in a hot shower when you are ill with fever, because blood can pool in your legs and you can get faint.

4. **Gargles** are very helpful if your throat is sore. Put a touch of salt (very small amount) in a glass of warm (not hot) water. Gargle periodically during the day. Steaming will also help your sore throat and can replace a gargle.

5. **Humidification**—A small (1 to 1.5 gallon) steam vaporizer or cool mist humidifier is very helpful when the heating systems are on and the air is very dry. Air conditioning can cause dryness in the room.

   **Saline nasal spray**—you can use this at any time to help humidify the nose.

6. **Do Not Smoke or Vape.** Any smoke is an irritant. This includes marijuana.

7. **Deep Breathing Exercises during the day.** When you are ill and breathing with shallow breaths, some lung tissue can collapse (atelectasis). This makes you more prone to pneumonia.

   A London hospital doctor, Dr. Sarfaraz Munshi describes a breathing technique that could have significant preventive value. He urges patients to begin practicing the breathing technique at the start of your infection. His video is backed up by the chief medical officer of the American Lung Association.

   Click to follow the link to the video and an article telling about it.

   **Dizziness can occur so do this safely sitting.**
   a. Take 5 deep breaths in and each time hold the breath for 5 seconds.
   b. On the 6th deep breath, you will take it in and do a big cough, covering your mouth. This is one cycle.
   c. Now repeat a second cycle.
   d. Then lay on your stomach on the bed with a pillow under your chest taking slightly deeper than normal breaths for the next 10 minutes. Most of your lung tissue is towards your back so laying in the prone position helps keep the smaller airways open.
   e. Repeat this several times a day.

**Purpose of this technique:** The initial deep breaths help all the airways to open up. You want any mucus to dislodge and be removed by the big cough at the end of the 6th breath.
8. Simple **leg exercises** can be helpful. When you are ill and weak and not moving too much, the leg muscles get very weak. Two exercises to keep your legs stronger and improve circulation are:
   a) Laying flat on your back on the bed, push a knee down against the bed. This causes the thigh muscle (quadriceps) to contract. Hold the contraction for 10 seconds. Do 5-10 repetitions and repeat with the other leg. Do this 3-4 times daily.
   b) Flex your feet towards and away from you 10-20 times. Do this 3-4 times daily.

For Fever, Headache, and Muscle Aching
**Acetaminophen (Tylenol)** comes in 325 mg or 500 mg tablets. Take as little as possible since some fever probably helps to fight infection. If you have an underlying medical condition, check the dose with your medical provider.

**Do not take ibuprophen (Motrin) or any of the other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs for fever or any other symptoms.**

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