

Special Coronavirus Update

The board members of North Fork Senior Connections have determined that previously scheduled public events in March are not in the best interests of our membership and the community, given that the pandemic spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) puts at particular risk that portion of the population we are dedicated to serve. In light of the information gathered from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and public health officials, we are cancelling the Death Cafe scheduled for Thursday, March 19th in Hotchkiss, and our Potluck Soup Night, scheduled at Edesia Kitchens on March 24th. We trust that our membership understands the gravity of the situation, and that we will likely continue to refrain from scheduling public gatherings in the foreseeable future, depending on the way the pandemic response develops.

Here's what we know so far:

Information from China and Washington State indicates that some people are at higher risk for serious illness or even death from this viral infection. This includes older adults and people with serious chronic medical conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, and lung disease. **The CDC recommends that people in this group begin making preparations now, including stocking up on supplies, taking everyday precautions to keep space between yourself and others (people can transmit the disease without exhibiting symptoms), limiting close contact and washing your hands often. If you are sick, stay at home except to get medical care. We should be avoiding crowds and non-essential travel as much as possible to further reduce the risk of being exposed.**

If NFSC members can be of service in helping you to make such preparations, **please request our services by placing a call (970-527-3482) or send us email (nfseniorconnections@gmail.com)**

As always, we are here to help.

What you can do to prepare:

1. Make it a routine to frequently wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds (the approximate time it takes to sing "Happy Birthday" twice.) Do this especially after blowing your nose, coughing, sneezing, or first thing when you come home. If you cough or sneeze, use a tissue and throw it away.
2. Use hand sanitizer (60% alcohol or more) only when you cannot wash your hands with soap and water. At the grocery store, use the provided wipes to clean the cart and use another one when you leave the store. Isopropyl alcohol works as well as wipes.

3. Avoid touching your face, nose, and eyes unless you just washed your hands.
4. In public, touch surfaces like elevator buttons, door handles, and handrails with knuckles or elbows. Avoid shaking hands. If you must touch something, use your sleeve or a tissue to cover your hand or finger; then toss the tissue.
5. Every day, use household detergent and water to clean surfaces and objects you touch regularly (tables, countertops, light switches, doorknobs, and cabinet handles).
6. The CDC recommends you prepare to separate yourself and loved ones from others (social distancing) to reduce your risk of infection. Prepare to stay home for two weeks or more.
7. Get your prescriptions filled for a couple of months or sign up for the no extra cost pill packaging and delivery directly to you.

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8. Ask your medical insurer whether your coverage includes "extended-day supply."

RevolutionMeds: <http://revmedsrx.com/>

CVS: <https://www.cvs.com/content/multidose>

PillPack from Amazon: <https://www.pillpack.com/>

9. If you will soon need a refill on your prescriptions, contact your health care provider. If you have current health issues or are in a high risk group, contact your health care provider for additional recommendations.

10. Stock up on the supplies you would need if you got sick, such as over-the-counter meds (for fever, aches, coughs) and medical supplies (tissues, thermometer, lozenges).

11. Plan meals for a few weeks and stock up on food and supplies. Consider making a few meals and freezing them, such as a big pot of chili to share with a healthy neighbor or friend in exchange for some homemade lasagna. Cook ahead and you can use what is fresh. Unlike during a storm, you can expect to have a working freezer, use it.

12. Make a list of your emergency contacts - family, friends, doctors, pharmacy, and your designated medical agent - and prescription drugs you take. In an emergency, consider exchanging/sharing your list with neighbors, family, or friends.

13. Consider your pets. Stock up on food, litter, and meds.

14. If you live with someone, make a sick room so the ill one can be separated. Think about your family or friends who might be alone and check on them. Encourage them to begin their preparations and then compare notes.

Contact information for local and state health departments:

Delta county Health Dept. - (970)874-2712

deltacounty.com/688/Coronavirus-19

Colorado Dept. of Health - 1-(877)-462-2911

COHELP@RMPDC.org

If you or someone you are caring for becomes symptomatic (developing a cough, fever, or shortness of breath) recommendations include:

1. People who are mildly ill with COVID-19 are urged to isolate at home during their illness. You should restrict activities outside your home, except for getting medical care. Do not go to work, school, or public areas. Avoid using public transportation, ride-sharing, or taxis.
2. As much as possible, stay in a specific room and away from other people in your home. Also, you should use a separate bathroom, if available.
3. You should restrict contact with pets and other animals while you are sick with COVID-19, just like you would around other people. Although there have not been reports of pets or other animals becoming sick with COVID-19, it is still recommended that people sick with COVID-19 limit contact with animals until more information is known about the virus.
4. If you have a medical appointment or medical emergency, call the healthcare provider or dispatcher and tell them that you have or may have COVID-19. This will allow steps to be taken to keep other people from getting infected or exposed.
5. If you are contagious, you should wear a face mask when you are around other people (e.g., sharing a room or vehicle) or pets and before you enter a health-care provider's office.
6. Patients with confirmed COVID-19 should remain under home isolation precautions until the risk of secondary transmission to others is thought to be low. The decision to discontinue home isolation precautions should be made in consultation with healthcare providers and state and local health departments.

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

Colorado Department of Health: <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/2019-novel-coronavirus>