

COVID-19 causes confusion and distress

Local experts and alumni in the medical field discuss facts and myths of the coronavirus and its seriousness

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The sidewalks are empty. People go to the store and stock up on canned foods and toilet paper. The streets and highways are empty, occasionally broadcasting a car or two. Even the school is empty except for a few patrolling the building like assistant principal Joe Voelker.

America is now in quarantine.

The recent outbreak of coronavirus's medical name is COVID-19. The COVID-19 virus is one of multiple coronaviruses, named for its discovery in 2019. The reason

this virus is more well known is because it is now a pandemic, meaning the disease has become widespread in the world.

COVID-19, as many people now know, popped up in China at the end of last year in Wuhan, then spread to other nations. This is when the World Health Organization declared that it became a pandemic.

"The coronavirus has impacted almost every aspect of my life. It has isolated me from people that I normally have daily interactions with. Beyond that, it has caused an intense separation in every individual," said senior Emily Butrum. "It has caused a strain that has separated our neighbors, friends,

strangers, and even family."

The coronavirus's main symptoms are fever, cough, and shortness of breath. While these are mild symptoms for some, they can become deadly for others. The virus can develop symptoms such as trouble breathing, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, new confusion or inability to arouse, and bluish lips or face according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC].

Health centers are now in overdrive to contain the virus.

"Now, no visitors are allowed," said speech language pathologist Breanna Ferguson, who works at a skilled nursing facility called Communicare

Health at Sellersburg Health and Rehab. "The outside personnel, so hospice nurses, the lobotomists, those are all restricted. There are very few people allowed in the building outside of employees. The employees that do come in have to come in one door and they have to leave one door. All the other doors are completely locked and there is no in and out. [We] have to wear a mask at all times."

Once these symptoms appear, medical attention should be sought out immediately. COVID-19 is the most deadly for those whose immune systems are compromised.

"Based on currently available

information and clinical expertise, older adults and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions might be at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19," said the CDC website.

This virus affects everyone, even those not at as much of a risk. Family members of those who are at risk have to be careful, and a growing number of people have already lost family members.

"I am most worried about my family. My grandma works in the ER and everyday I just hope for the best. I worry about the other families in the world who are laid off of their jobs or

Timeline of COVID-19 news locally and nationally in chronological order

Feb. 11, 2020

Virus is given an official name

The World Health Organization named the virus COVID-19 as an acronym for coronavirus disease 2019.

March 6, 2020

Indiana declares first presumptive positive case

Marion County adult is quarantined after traveling to Boston and obtaining COVID-19

Feb. 29, 2020

Virus claims first American victim

Authorities reported the first COVID-19 death from a patient in the Seattle area.

March 10, 2020

Universities consider moving online

Indiana University moves schooling online. Purdue and other universities soon followed suit.

have lost loved ones,” said junior Alex Barbee. “It breaks my heart I can’t imagine.”

The most dangerous aspect of the coronavirus is known as ARDS which stands for acute respiratory distress syndrome.

“And that’s really what’s killing people, is the acute respiratory distress syndrome because their lungs are getting fibrotic so their almost becoming leather and not able to expand and get oxygen,” said Class of 2016 alumna and patient care associate Delaney Schweinhart. Schweinhart was assigned to work on the COVID-19 unit at the Norton Women’s and Children’s Hospital.

For these reasons, facilities that hold elderly patients are on high alert.

“Today, they just came up and decided that for certain people the surgical masks

that we have, that we’ve been wearing isn’t enough anymore,” said Ferguson. “So there are a couple people that are getting tested that they decided that unless you have one of the higher level masks that you get from a hospital, you are not allowed in that room.”

The pandemic has also caused schools in the U.S. to be closed down and the borders closed.

“The school in which I am going to is an international and global studies school. Depending

on how long life is changed due to COVID-19, my career could be in major jeopardy,” said

Butrum. “I haven’t been able to visit the campus due to the virus. All around, I genuinely

is vital.

“That is honestly the biggest killer in this is the amount of false information out there and people not knowing how to look up credible information because there’s so many people trying to fear monger in this for personal or corporate gain that there’s just a lot of, and I hate to quote it, but ‘fake news’ out there...” said Schweinhart.

For now, those in their homes also face trying to stay busy as they are limited to them.

“Life has become incredibly mind numbing and the days seem to blur into one long

day,” said Butrum. “Finding new hobbies and interests all day seems to be the only thing available for intellectual stimulation.”

As of right now many medical professionals are recommending basic procedures and tips such as avoiding close contact with others and to avoid frequent touching in the face region.

“The best way to protect yourself from the spread of coronaviruses is by avoiding close contact with people who are sick, washing hands frequently and avoiding touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands,” said Erica Kaufman West. West is an Infectious Disease Physician with Franciscan Physician Network. “That’s the biggest preventive defensive thing that you can do.”

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Delaney Schweinhart

Patient care worker in the COVID-19 unit at Norton Women’s and Children’s Hospital

March 13, 2020
 Trump declares U.S. in a state of emergency
 Trump prepares to use 50 billion dollars in federal funds to combat COVID-19

March 16, 2020
 First COVID-19 death in Indiana
 Coronavirus takes the life of a patient in Marion County.

March 13, 2020
 First COVID-19 case in Floyd County
 Coronavirus found in local after being admitted to Baptist Health Floyd Hospital

March 26, 2020
 U.S. leads in most confirmed cases of the virus
 United States had taken the title for most reported cases by the virus and surpasses China and Italy

Sources: New York Times and Indiana Public Media

To read follow up interviews with alumni in the medical field dealing with COVID-19, go to fchsbagpiper.wordpress.com.