

A message from Stephen Thomas and the Infection Prevention Team:

As the novel coronavirus epidemic expands, Upstate continues an aggressive practice of screening ill people for recent travel with a focus on Asia.

Once a traveler from Asia with a potential respiratory illness is identified:

- They should immediately be provided a mask to wear and be placed in a private room. A negative pressure respiratory isolation room away from other patients would be ideal.
- All staff who engage with this patient should wear personal protective equipment to include a N95 mask and eye protection.
- Infection Control and Infectious Diseases should be notified immediately so they can assist with evaluating the patient and engaging the New York State Department of Health (NYS DOH). If the determination is made that the patient is someone of interest a testing plan will be implemented in coordination with the NYS DOH and United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (US CDC). During this time the patient will need to remain in a respiratory isolation room.

Of note, **the patient rooms built on 8M in response to the 2014 Ebola outbreak are NOT suitable for patients with suspected or proven novel coronavirus infections.** The 8M rooms were built to meet specifications for diseases spread thru contact and not for respiratory pathogens.

The best rooms for people with suspected novel coronavirus are negative pressure respiratory isolation rooms.

Fundamental public health practices and avoiding areas at risk for transmission (i.e. China) are the best defense against novel coronavirus. Frequent hand washing, avoiding people with symptoms of respiratory illness, covering your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze, and avoiding work or other gatherings if you do become ill are a few of the best methods to protect yourself and others from this and other respiratory pathogens.

Thank you.

Amy

Amy Tucker, MD, MHCM
Chief Medical Officer
Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs
VP for Ambulatory Services & Population Health
Admin: Heidi Chapman
[315-464-4255](tel:315-464-4255)