

March 12, 2020

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A note to our patients:

Since the World Health Organization classified the SARS-CoV-2 virus and its subsequent COVID-19 infection as a global pandemic, I'm sure your inboxes, feeds, and conversations have quickly become saturated with talk about the virus. Maybe you're thinking it's not going to be as bad as the media is presenting, maybe you're worried that it's going to be worse than we can prepare for. One thing is certainly clear – it's already impacting your life in some capacity, large or small.

This statement will in some ways likely be similar, and may be very different in other ways from the statements you've seen from other companies. First of all, we want you all to know that we are following the CDC and WHO recommendations as a healthcare provider in order to keep our clinic as safe as it possibly can be. Our regular daily precautionary protocols are incredibly thorough, thanks to the requirements established through the Clean Needle Technique training we acupuncturists have to ensure safety:

- Our needles are sterile and single-use, isolated into a sharps container as soon as they are removed from a patient.
- Our cups are washed with soap to remove any organic compounds like oil, and then disinfected using a hospital grade disinfectant soak, and are never reused on a patient without going through this process first.
- Hard surfaces in the treatment rooms are cleaned with disinfectant after each patient. Linens provided in the rooms are changed between patients regardless of whether they were used, and face cradles and arm rests are also disinfected between patients. Linens are washed with bleach in addition to detergent.
- Practitioners' hands are washed with soap and water, and with alcohol-based (70%) hand sanitizer frequently, and especially prior to needle insertion and removal.
- Points to be needled are cleaned with 70% alcohol prior to needle insertion.
- Garbage is removed from the treatment rooms at the end of the day, or earlier if the waste basket is full before the end of the day.
- Disposable cups are provided for drinking water, and ceramic tea cups are washed and disinfected using a hospital grade disinfectant soak before being put out again for reuse. (As part of our COVID-19 response, reusable cups have been removed and replaced with single-use cups until the WHO announces an end to pandemic status).

In addition, we are taking the following steps to even further reduce the risk of transmission:

- We will continue to operate with normal business hours until otherwise instructed by the CDC, WHO, or local government.
- We will more frequently deep-clean the office, including vacuuming and mopping floors, based on patient scheduling intervals.
- Soft surfaces (treatment tables and table warmers, upholstered chairs, carpets, curtains, etc.) will be cleaned between patients and at the end of each day with scheduled patients with a fabric-

safe cleaner (diluted tea tree oil, which has been shown to be effective against bacteria including MRSA and has shown to be helpful in deactivating viruses).

- We will ONLY be present in the office to treat patients and to clean. This is usually how things end up being on most days, but we will be extra vigilant to also stay home unless it's absolutely required that we're out and about.
- If we are feeling unwell ourselves, or need to self-quarantine due to a household member feeling unwell, we will notify you immediately, and either cancel or reschedule appointments as required in order to keep you healthy and safe.

We ask the following of you, in order to help us continue to keep our office safe:

- Please follow the CDC's guidelines for reducing the risk of transmission. Wash your hands often, and correctly. Cough or sneeze into a disposable tissue (and then throw it away) or the crook of your elbow, and then wash your hands correctly. Stay at home if you're feeling unwell.
- Please stay home as much as you can, aside from work, doctor visits, acupuncture visits, and the like. There is no vaccine for SARS-CoV-2 and no one has built any natural immunity to SARS-CoV-2, as this is a novel (brand new) coronavirus. It is NOT clear yet whether or not the immunity developed following exposure to other types of common human coronaviruses will be helpful in fighting off infection with this new one. **The health and safety of those at highest risk (over 60 years of age or pre-existing conditions such as heart disease, respiratory compromise such as COPD and asthma, autoimmune disorders that are treated with immune suppressant drugs, diabetes, pregnant women, children, and those staying in homeless shelters – see the CDC website for additional at-risk groups) is dependent on the healthy population staying home as well. A healthy person who is infected but not showing symptoms can still spread the disease to an at-risk person.**
- We are suspending our late cancellation policy for those who are feeling unwell, until the WHO determines that the pandemic is sufficiently under control. A recent meeting of infectious disease specialists in California indicates that the most common signs and symptoms of COVID-19 infection one week before serious symptoms start (prodromal stage) included myalgia (muscle pain), malaise (extreme fatigue), cough, and low grade fever (less than 100F/38C). More severe difficulty breathing usually appears in the second week of disease. It's also important to note that, unlike a classical flu infection, fever typically does NOT have a sudden onset, and sometimes is not very prominent at all. **Err on the side of caution, and implement a self-quarantine if you have these prodromal signs and symptoms. Call your family doctor if your symptoms progress to more severe difficulty or painful breathing, or if you are concerned that you may have been exposed to the virus, and follow their guidance.**
- If you are directed by a family physician, ER doctor, or hospital staff to self-quarantine or self-isolate, **DO NOT BREAK QUARANTINE/ISOLATION**. Even if this is a precautionary step, and you have not been confirmed to have a COVID-19 infection, *please*, adhere to instructions to self-quarantine or self-isolate. **The health and safety of those at highest risk depends on your adherence to self-quarantine/self-isolation instructions.**
- **If you are diagnosed with COVID-19 infection and have been treated at Healthy Point Acupuncture within 14 days, please call, text, email, or direct message us (Facebook or Instagram, we don't care) and let us know so that we can follow CDC and WHO guidance on how to proceed in order to protect ourselves and our other patients.**
- If you have an appointment scheduled with us, and are feeling healthy, we are very much looking forward to seeing you and helping you stay healthy. Please come by yourself in order to limit the number of people in and out of the office as much as possible. If you have someone drive you, please have them wait in the car in the parking lot until your appointment is finished,

so we can limit the number of people in and out of the building as much as possible as well. Economical security is likely the main concern for small business owners right now. As much as we would love for you to continue your daily routines as usual so that we can continue to stay open and serve your needs, we understand that this is a potentially difficult time for a lot of people, and that there are a lot of uncertainties and worries right now. Please don't panic. Prepare, but be responsible and compassionate about it. Tune in to reputable sources for updated information (CDC, WHO) and local government for instructions on what the city/county/state needs us as citizens to do in order to keep the general population as safe as possible. But also, please continue to support your local businesses as much as you possibly can. We are doing as much as we can to keep our environment as safe as possible so that you can go about your daily lives with as little interruption as possible. We're also working on developing some telemedicine options for those who feel uncomfortable enough to self-quarantine early on. Keep an eye on our social media and our website for those updates. Remember that panic is also contagious. Keep your wits about you.

We are currently well-stocked on needed cleaning and clinic supplies. However, there is currently a local and online shortage of hand sanitizer and isopropyl alcohol, both of which are important clinic supplies for our practice. As of right now, we have enough to get us through several weeks, but depending on how long this situation lasts, how many treatments we have scheduled during that time, and whether or not local and online supply is replenished (as well as how often the supply is replenished, and what kind of buying limitations are placed), we may run out of what we need to keep operating. If you have extra supply of hand sanitizer and/or alcohol and are willing to redistribute in order to help us (or other small local businesses) keep our doors open so we can continue to provide care to our community, we would be happy to pay a fair market price for these items. Please contact us if you'd like to contribute. We will keep you informed on this status as well.

On a personal note: I wish you all health, safety, and prosperity in the coming weeks. I hope this situation is far more mild than it has the potential to become for everyone's sake. I am so grateful that so many of you continue to trust me with your care, and I look forward to continuing to do what I can to support your health physiologically, emotionally, and energetically through this. If you have any questions about the situation, how Traditional Chinese Medicine can help, what specific practices and protocols are used at HPA to keep the office clean and safe, how you can better protect yourself and your loved ones – anything at all, please don't hesitate to ask.

It will all be okay. Wash your hands.

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