



PSA Script for COVID-19 (November 19, 2020)-

Keshi, hello again- This is Dr. Tom Faber, Clinical Director of Zuni IHS, here with an important update regarding the COVID-19 pandemic and recent developments here in Zuni. This message is being recorded on November 20th, 2020.

Unfortunately, the number of people with COVID-19 has grown significantly since the last time I spoke with you. After nearly two months with no new cases in Zuni, we are once again experiencing widespread community transmission just like the rest of the country. Widespread community transmission means that a large number of people are currently infected with COVID-19 and are spreading it every time they go out of their homes. Because even people with no symptoms can spread the virus, it is impossible to know who is infectious. This is what makes being around other people so dangerous right now and is the reason for the public health advice you've heard many times by now:

Please- When you leave your house just assume that everyone you come in contact with is potentially contagious. Remember that the virus spreads when it enters your mouth, nose, or eyes usually inside tiny water droplets that float in the air. Therefore, avoid crowds and only leave your house when absolutely necessary. When you must leave your house or be around other people,

- Wear a mask to keep the virus from spraying in the air as you breath or talk and to keep it from landing in your mouth or nose.
- Stay at least 6 feet away from other people so the virus won't reach you as it floats in the air
- Wash your hands often because when you touch things, the virus can be laying on those surfaces waiting to get on your fingers and then into your body.
- Clean surfaces often to kill any viruses that might be laying there
- If you start to feel sick with COVID symptoms, isolate yourself completely from other people and get tested. COVID symptoms are fever, cough, muscle aches, fatigue, loss of taste or smell, and sometimes diarrhea. Isolation means staying in a room by yourself and not sharing any space, utensils, or food with another person.

- If you are a close contact of someone who has COVID, quarantine yourself for 14 days. This means staying home and not leaving even for things like shopping or work. A close contact means being within 6 feet of someone with COVID for more than 3 minutes regardless of whether you were outside or wearing a mask.

I know all of these measures are difficult, but the only way to control this virus, which is currently spreading out of control, is for all of us to do all of these things and take them seriously.

In light of the increase in COVID cases, we at the Zuni IHS Hospital are returning to many of the measures that helped us effectively meet increased community needs this summer.

- First, we are limiting in person patient visits to only urgent or emergency needs. This means that our Emergency Department and Urgent Care Department will remain unchanged- open 24/7 as always. Primary care medical appointments, however, will return to phone visits unless there is an important reason why you need to be seen in person. Providing childhood immunizations, for example, is an important reason why we will keep in person visits for children under two years old. Routine optometry, dental, podiatry, physical and occupational therapy appointments will be rescheduled, but those departments remain open for urgent needs, like treating infections or pain.

The reasons for limiting in person visits are to increase number of hospital staff available to manage the needs of COVID patients, to open up more space in which to treat COVID patients, and to decrease the potential for COVID spread within the hospital.

Some of the increased services that we are providing to meet your needs at this time are:

1) Drive through COVID testing and increasing the hours from 10:00am to 4:00 pm Monday – Friday. This is available at the parking lot near the hospital emergency department

2) Influenza vaccines every Tuesday and Thursday from 1:00pm to 4:00 pm. These are available at an outside booth located at the hospital's east entrance.

3) Our COVID Hotline is available for everyone to call Monday- Friday from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm in order to answer any of your COVID-related questions. The number is 782-7591. This is not a medical line, however, so please don't call for specific advice about how to care for someone who is sick.

And 4) Our pharmacy will continue to provide 90 day medication refills outside of the hospital at the East entrance Monday- Friday from 8am am to 5 pm.

I wanted to end by answering some commonly asked questions.

- The first is about the COVID vaccine and when it might be available here in Zuni. The good news is that there are at least two vaccines which have been shown to work very well. They each require two different shots a few weeks apart, but they seem to be around 95% effective

at preventing COVID-19. The current evidence is that they appear very safe as well. We are expecting one or both of these vaccines to be approved very soon. We will do everything we can to bring the vaccine to Zuni as soon as possible. In the beginning, we anticipate having a limited supply that we will use to vaccinate those at highest risk: elders and those with serious underlying diseases. We will be providing updates as soon as we know more about the vaccine, so stay posted.

- Another common question is who should get tested:

We recommend that people get tested if they have symptoms such as cough, fever, body aches, or loss of taste and smell. Remember if you develop these symptoms, the first and most important thing to do is isolate yourself to ensure that you don't spread the virus to others. If you have mild symptoms, then you can get tested through our hospital drive through clinic Monday-Friday from 10 am to 4 pm. After you are tested, make sure you continue to self-isolate in a separate room until you have been cleared by our hospital staff or until your test negative and you feel better. Of course, if you feel like you're developing severe symptoms like shortness of breath, extreme weakness or chest pain, please come to the emergency department right away. In addition to those with symptoms, the other group who should be tested are close contacts of a COVID-19 patient. Remember, close contact means being within 6 feet for as little as 3 minutes total- three one minute periods counts as a close contact. If you were the close contact, then the first step is to strictly quarantine to prevent spreading the virus. You must remain in quarantine for 14 days regardless of what the test result shows because it can take that long for the illness to develop. The purpose of testing, in this case, is to identify all other potential close contacts so that they can quarantine also for 14 days and prevent further spread.

- Finally, people often ask about the potential for reinfection after someone has recovered from COVID-19.

Right now, it appears that the chances of getting sick a second time are very, very low. There have only been a few cases reported world-wide. Having said that, however, the recommendation for social distancing, mask wearing, hand hygiene etc. does not change after someone recovers from COVID. Because there is still that risk of transmission, it's important to remain vigilant at all times.

Thank you for your attention. We know that these are uncertain and scary times for everyone, and we want you to know that we are always here for you at the hospital to help you care for your physical and also mental health. If you have any questions about the services available at the hospital or about how to protect yourself from getting infected, please call our COVID hotline Mon- Fri from 9am to 5 pm at 782-7591.

We appreciate your efforts to keep Zuni safe and to protect our elders and most vulnerable. Keep up the great work.