What to Know About the Coronavirus (COVID-19):

What is Coronavirus?
Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that are common in people and many different species of animals, including camels, cattle, cats, and bats. Rarely, animal coronaviruses can infect people and then spread between people such as with SARS-CoV, MERS-CoV, and now with this new virus (named SARS-CoV-2).

How does it spread?
The virus is mainly thought to spread from person to person, through respiratory droplets produced by coughs or sneezes. This means that if you have been within 6 feet of an infected person for an extended period of time, there is potential for respiratory droplets to land in your mouth or nose, and then inhaled.

My friend or relative didn’t seem that sick. Could I still be infected?
People are thought to be most contagious when they are most symptomatic (the sickest). Some spread might be possible before people show symptoms; there have been reports of this occurring with this new coronavirus, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

What are the symptoms of Coronavirus?
Symptoms range from mild to severe, and may appear 2-14 days after exposure. Fever, cough and shortness of breath are the most common ones.

What should I do if I think I have been exposed?
The first step is to call your healthcare professional. Please do not arrive at your doctor’s office or hospital before calling them in advance. They will work with the local department of health department and infectious disease physicians to determine if you need to be tested for COVID-19. There is a chance that you may be asked to stay home and away from other people until coronavirus is ruled out.

What if I live with someone who is diagnosed or under investigation? Do I need to isolate myself from a patient with COVID-19 at home?
Patients with COVID-19 may be isolated in their home to recover. In this case, you should seek the advice of your healthcare provider or physicians who are caring for your friend or family member in case you may have been at risk for exposure as well. Those without symptoms should continue to avoid the infected person as much as possible, and use a separate bedroom and bathroom if available.

What is the best way to protect myself?
Besides avoiding close contact with people who are sick, the single best way to prevent the virus is to wash your hands regularly with clean running water. Lather your hands by rubbing them together with soap, including the back of hands, between fingers and under nails, for at least 20 seconds. Rinse and dry your hands using a clean towel or air dry them, and use a towel to turn off the faucet. The CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19.

Call the White Plains Hospital Coronavirus Awareness Hotline at (914) 681-2900 to get information and speak with a live person 24/7, who will be able to guide you through next steps if you suspect you have coronavirus.