

As a public health nurse and the Parish Nurse at the Church of the Good Shepherd, I just wanted to take a few moments to share some information that might be helpful to those following COVID-19, or the new strain of the Coronavirus.

Since what we know about the virus is changing so quickly, I feel as though it would be most helpful to share information regarding where you can turn for the most accurate and up to date information on the virus. The media, while well-meaning, does not always provide an accurate portrayal of what is going on with communicable disease.

With all of that said, I wanted to simply share some sites that are useful as we navigate our way through this latest pandemic.

The World Health Organization (WHO) is an agency that provides information on communicable disease by educating and supporting communities as they prepare, survey, and respond to outbreaks. The agency has information available on the website that is searchable by topic, including how people can protect themselves, as well as updated information on where the illness has spread throughout the world, which may help with travel plans. The site also has videos available that provide education for community members. <https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus>

The National Institutes for Health (NIH) is the nation's medical research agency whose goal is to foster and support medical research in order to provide a socially responsible knowledge base that leads to improvement of our nation's health. On the website, the organization includes signs and symptoms of illness, steps to prevent illness, travel information, and links to current research on various health topics, including COVID-19. <https://www.nih.gov/health-information/coronavirus>

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is an agency whose goal is to protect the nation from biological threats including viruses. The CDC is the “go to” organization in terms of communicable disease. The agency handles disease testing, vaccine development, and disaster response to outbreaks. Local health departments are in close contact with the CDC to provide accurate testing and response to local, statewide, and national outbreaks.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

The local health departments are also good resources. They provide information regarding outbreak statistics and prevention measures on a local level. Each county has a health department that serves its community members. When outbreaks are occurring, private health clinics and doctor’s offices turn to local health departments for testing and treatment resources. Here is the link for the Wake County Health Department:

<http://www.wakegov.com/covid19/Pages/default.aspx>

Finally, Johns Hopkins University is a medical university that carries out cutting-edge research in regard to medical care. Their site has a map depicting the current outbreak of COVID-19 and is very helpful in providing a “visual” of the global spread of the illness.

<https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html>

If you have any questions about any of the information you find or would like more information, please contact me at tcarpenter357@gmail.com. For now, wash your hands and keep them away from your face. And just as importantly, educate yourself!