

# Nurse's Notes Vol. 3

by Marie Angell Habershaw BSN, RN



Here in Rhode Island, this week brings us some good news in the ability to test for COVID-19. Due to the partnership between CVS and the State of Rhode Island, a rapid testing site was opened on the grounds of Twin River Casino in Lincoln, R.I. This allows a person to be tested and receive their results within approximately fifteen minutes. Right now, this is primarily being used for people who have to work every day out of their homes - first responders, grocery store workers, etc. If that applies and if you have symptoms associated with COVID-19, go to CVS.com and follow the directions to make a site appointment. At this time, only those who are 18 and older can be tested at the Lincoln site.

For all others, continue to call your doctor or pediatrician and they will direct you to your next steps.

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## The Science Behind the COVID-19 Test

If you are showing signs of this virus, your healthcare worker will use a long swab in the back of your throat and in your nostrils. This will be placed in a container with a solution to preserve the sample, and it will be sent for testing. In Rhode Island, the results of these tests are analyzed at the Department of Health for critically ill hospitalized patients, at the rapid test site in Lincoln, and at private laboratories. While the rapid test will give results in minutes, the laboratory testing will take one to three days.

Specifically, the test is looking for two genes - a sample is considered positive if both genes are found, and negative if neither is detected. If only one gene is found then the test is considered inconclusive. Testing that would tell if a person developed antibodies to the virus is being rolled out quickly. This would give researchers the ability to learn more about how this virus travels and the population's herd immunity. It will be able to detect if someone had the virus and then developed antibodies through their immune system to fight the virus.

## Protecting Children

With the information we have now it does not appear that children are at any more risk than adults. We know that people with pre-existing conditions are more at risk. Keeping children healthy can lead to all of us remaining well. The CDC reports that children generally exhibit milder symptoms - fever, runny nose, cough, and in some cases vomiting and diarrhea. As time goes on, we will learn much more about how this disease impacts our youngest populations.

We can help protect our children by having them wear cloth coverings whenever they leave the house, just as we should be doing. This is to protect others, not the individual wearing the mask. If we all do this, then we can impact the spread of this virus. **If children meet in groups, such as in neighborhoods, it places everyone at risk.**

Here are some ideas to help our children stay healthy

- Watch your child for any signs of illness. Contact your pediatrician with any concerns.
- Watch for signs of stress in your child - increased worry, changes in eating or sleeping habits, difficulty with attention to tasks.
- Be a good role model - wash your hands frequently and wear the face covering when going out.
- Help your child get outside for a few minutes every day - walk or take a bike ride! Use indoor stretch breaks or dance breaks - it might even make for some great photos!

## Silver Linings

While this is certainly not the way we usually celebrate Holy Week, perhaps we can adjust our family traditions in some ways. Video conferencing during egg coloring or during Easter dinner might help your whole family stay connected.

Hopefully one day soon, we will all be talking about how we got through this challenge - perhaps chronicling some experiences your family is dealing with can help. Future generations will definitely talk about this, and about ways we all coped. So take some photos of home haircuts, distance learning, waving to each other through the front door. It will be up to us, the adults, to get through this with as much grace and dignity as we can.

Blessed Easter to you all!

If I can be of any assistance, please feel free to email me at [mhabershaw@iccatholicschool.org](mailto:mhabershaw@iccatholicschool.org)

Marie Angell Habershaw BSN, RN