

Dr. Jensen & Dr. Wilson's COVID-19 Update

March 29, 2020

Never Give In!

Never give in — never, never, never, never, in nothing great or small, large or petty, never give in except to convictions of honour and good sense. Never yield to force; never yield to the apparently overwhelming might of the enemy.

These words of Winston Churchill, uttered at a critical moment in Britain's history, apply to us today. **We are calling on you, our community of Uxbridge: never give in!**



Here's what you can do

Get help if you are sick or have a health problem

Call your family doctor first. If you can't reach them, call 905-852-1009 from 9:00am - 8:00pm to book a phone appointment. We soon hope to have an after-hours hotline you can call for medical advice; stay tuned. Use our ER for accidents and emergencies only.

Stay home

Extreme social distancing is the only thing that will impact the surge that will take place in the next 2-3 weeks. We strongly agree with our province's recommendation to limit gatherings to five or fewer people. Did you know that some communities successfully protected themselves from the Spanish Flu Pandemic of 1918? Read about it. What can you do to help us become an "escape community?"

Limit errands

Designate one family member to run errands. That person needs to be well, wash their hands prior to leaving the house, practice social distancing in the store, and wash their hands after leaving the grocery store. Minimize grocery runs and consolidate errands.

Here's what you can give

We are supporting Markham Stouffville Hospital/Uxbridge Cottage Hospital's [initiative to secure extra donated personal protective equipment \(PPE\)](#) for frontline staff.

Where: St. Paul's Leaskdale Church (12251 Regional Rd. #1, Leaskdale)

When: Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays: 10 am-12 noon, 1 pm-3 pm, and 4 pm-7 pm

How:

- with clean hands place the supplies in a bag
- when you get to the church, drive your car under the awning by the main doors and drop your supplies in the container outside the door. Volunteers will safely collect these supplies and store them.

If you have any questions or need someone to pick up donated PPE, please contact 905-852-8584.

Here's what you can discuss with your loved ones

We know that this may be uncomfortable, but we encourage you to talk with your loved ones about your wishes if you are sick and unable to speak for yourself. We have gathered information that we hope will help you in your conversations and included it at the end of this newsletter. Dr. Jensen has [prepared a video to explain](#). We ask that you grab a cuppa, take a deep breath, and thoughtfully digest the contents of these resources. And then please have those important conversations.

We conclude by reflecting on one of the core values of our hospital: **trust**. We define it as “unshakable dependability, reliability, honesty and truthfulness.” We want to thank you for the trust you have placed in us at this time. Let's continue together to hold the line, not giving up this spirit of trust that we are placing in one another.

With thanks for all your help to fight COVID-19 in these moments that matter,

Carlye & Jennifer

Dr. Carlye Jensen is the Chief of Staff at Uxbridge Cottage Hospital
Dr. Jennifer Wilson is the President of Uxbridge Health Centre

PPE Drive: <https://www.helpmsh.ca/ppe-drive>

Dr. Jensen's Community Conversation: <https://youtu.be/ijpH4SryNbo>

“What If...” Discussions

by Dr. Carlye Jensen & Dr. Jennifer Wilson

“What if” discussions can sometimes be a lot of fun: What if we won the lottery? What if I go blonde? What if we had twins? (Did you know we both have twins?)

“What if” discussions can also be very challenging. What if I fail? What if I don’t know what to do? What if I lose my job? What if I lose someone I love? Sometimes these “what if” discussions can be so hard that people avoid them all together.

We have some “what if” questions for you to think about. What if your loved one got sick and you didn’t know what their wishes were? What if you couldn’t talk to them or visit them?

If these questions make you uncomfortable, that is normal and expected. But we would not be advising you well if we did not encourage you to keep reading and thinking about these “what if” scenarios, because planning and preparing for future events can also provide peace of mind to individuals and their families amidst the uncertainty of these unsettling times.

Why now?

We are uniquely positioned in time when we know there is a very specific disease in our community that targets certain populations and often requires very invasive care. When you have these conversations well in advance, you can make sure that everyone is informed and making choices while they are calm and reflective.

To help your discussions we have gathered some important information for you.

What care can be provided for COVID-19?

There is no cure for COVID-19, but we can provide care to help support people through the illness. This may include oxygen, intravenous fluids, acetaminophen and other medications to support the body.

In severe cases (which affect 15% of the elderly and approximately 0.1% of otherwise healthy persons), intubation and ventilation is required. This is when someone is given medications to put them to sleep (much like going under anaesthesia for surgery) and they are put on a breathing machine (often referred to as ‘life support’) in an intensive care unit (ICU).

Most people who need this level of care need to be on the ventilator for two weeks. About half of all people who go on this type of support will survive. Persons who have underlying

conditions like diabetes, heart disease, COPD, high blood pressure, active cancer or dementia are much less likely to survive. (Recent studies suggest that only 3% of these people will.)

Intensive care and artificial life support is a grueling experience that causes suffering and results in serious, long-term medical problems. Most older adults who are discharged from an ICU will require admission to a long term care facility.

What if I don't want to go on life support? What then?

While there is not much that can be done to cure COVID-19, we can always support patients with medications to help them through the illness, and if things don't look to be improving there are many things we can do to relieve suffering. We can use medications to help reduce pain, fever, shortness of breath. Most importantly, we as healthcare providers can be with you and care for you.

So what now?

Our job as health professionals is to provide you with the best care possible, and in order to do so we need to know what your wishes are. Here's what we hope you will do:

Start with yourself. Think about what *your* wishes would be if *you* were to fall sick. Would you want to stay in your home or go to a hospital? Would you want to go into an intensive care unit (ICU) and receive life support?

Next, **talk about your wishes with your loved ones.** Ensure that your family members understand your goals of care.

Contact your family physician to discuss the best options for achieving your desired care. (Trust us: we physicians *want* to hear from you so that we can provide the best possible care.)

Finally, **document your goals.** Make sure that your family and physician or nursing team have your wishes clearly documented to guide your healthcare team.

And if you have a loved one whose wishes have not been clearly expressed, recognize that they may not know how to start the conversation. You can **help by sharing this information** with them and asking if they have considered these "what if" questions. Encourage them to discuss this with their family physician and to document their wishes so that, if they get sick, you can ensure that they will receive the best possible care.