COVID-19
THE IMPORTANCE OF SHARED DECISION-MAKING

ACTION STEPS FOR EMPLOYERS:
2. Promote use of the Choosing Wisely “5 Questions to Ask your Doctor...”
3. Understand and communicate about the spread of coronavirus.

Easing Stress on Patients, Providers and the Healthcare System
Helping employees make informed decisions about their choices and responsibilities is a growing trend that is especially important in light of COVID-19. Having a tool to guide shared decision-making conversations enables employees to think through their questions and concerns in advance of an office or e-visit so conversations with healthcare providers are efficient and effective.

1. Promote shared decision-making and patient-centered care.
Shared decision-making is a model of patient-centered care that enables people to play a role in the medical decisions that affect their health. It operates under two premises.
First, patients armed with evidence-based care knowledge feel empowered to participate in care decisions.
Second, clinicians use patient preferences to guide recommendations.

Why Is Shared Decision-Making More Important Than Ever During COVID-19?
- Good information helps people make informed care decisions and manage their anxiety.
- The impact of COVID-19 varies greatly based on patient age, risk factors, and personal environment.

Prudent use of care and resources is essential with a system under extreme stress.
- There is no known immunization or treatment available.
- Possible treatments featured in the media are based on poor-quality studies.
- Everyone must take action to limit virus spread.

2. Encourage use of the Choosing Wisely “5 Questions to Ask your Doctor...”
Encouraging employees to use the “5 questions” developed by the Choosing Wisely campaign to equip patients to have meaningful conversations about evidence-based standards of care and share decision-making responsibilities.
“There’s never been a better time for clear effective communication between employees and workplace leaders. COVID-19 is unique and requires everyone to work together as a team.”

— Scott Conard, MD DABFM, FAAFP
Founder of Converging Health

Choosing Wisely focuses on care that is:
- Supported by evidence
- Not duplicative of other tests or procedures
- Most effective and least risky
- Truly necessary
- Informed by patient needs and preferences

Printable wallet cards featuring the “5 Questions” are available at choosingwisely.org, along with a large library of provider- and patient-friendly materials on dozens of healthcare topics.


The practical aspects of how organizations can take action are complex. The graphic below shows how the virus is spread. A detailed explanation is available by clicking on the first link under “Employer Resources.”

RESOURCES FOR EMPLOYERS:
- National Alliance COVID-19 resource page
- Choosingwisely.org
- Covidactnow.org
- Local public health departments

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“Tools like the ‘5 Questions’ equip employees to take part in their care. When coupled with promoting access to virtual care options, stress on employers, employees and the healthcare system is lessened.”

— Michael Thompson
National Alliance President & CEO

UNDERSTANDING THE SPREAD OF THE COVID-19

Infectious before symptoms
Day 2 to 11 · Median Day 5

Breathing Difficult & Hospitalization
Day 8.5

Sick & Worsens

Fever/Symptoms
Day 5.4

Recovery or Death

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14

Sick & Recovers

Same as above
Day 2-11

Recovery Day 8.4 and beyond
Mild Symptoms No longer infectious

Sick & Worsens

Fever/Symptoms
Day 5.4

Recovery or Death

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14

Sick & Recovers

Same as above
Day 2-11

Recovery Day 8.4 and beyond
Mild Symptoms No longer infectious

CHOOSING WISELY COVID-19: Bringing the “5 Questions” to Life
(Simulated conversation with a healthy 30-year-old patient; not intended to be medical advice)

Based on your symptoms, the doctor ordered a COVID-19 nasal swab test. The test was positive. You’ve heard that hydroxychloroquine and azithromycin might help you get better faster. The principles of Choosing Wisely can inform your decision.

1. Are these medications likely to help me? Evidence that these medications work is based on very small, low-quality studies. Because you are in good health and age 30, your chance of serious illness requiring hospitalization is very low.

2. What are the risks? These drugs do not often cause serious side effects when given for a short time but can interact with one of your current medications.

3. What are simpler, safer options? The best option is to stay home, rest, push fluids, and use acetaminophen for fever or body aches. If symptoms worsen and you begin to have trouble breathing, call our urgent care line right away.

4. What happens if I do nothing? It’s highly likely you’ll get better with home care.

5. How much do the drugs cost? The cost is about $20-$30. Even though they are affordable and unlikely to cause harm, I do not recommend them for you at this time.