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START OF TRANSCRIPT**[00:00:00]**

Hello, everyone, and welcome to the Thursday edition of the podcast. This is Dr. Nicholas Van Sickels. I am the chief medical officer at Crescent Care, a federally qualified health center in New Orleans. And we're doing this podcast semi-daily, three times a week now to really talk about a lot of issues that are around in our community and with our patients, our clients and really to anyone who is listening to this around the coronavirus outbreak. And today, we are really lucky we're actually gonna turn it over to the children and have the kids talked to our amazing pediatrician, Dr. Allison Cragin, who I'll have introduce herself in just second and kind of go over what they're seeing from their perspective. I will stop there and I'm just going to only talk when asked to speak. And I will let everyone else introduce themselves. Go for it.

[00:00:50]

My name is Chaya Chaudry Halprin, and I am the daughter of Jason Halprin.

[00:00:58]

I'm Maia Rosenberg and I'm the best friend of Chaya. I've known her for a very long time.

[00:01:05]

Thank you, Maia.

[00:01:06]

I'm Dr. Allison Cragin. I'm a pediatrician here at Crescent Care.

[00:01:10]

I'm Jason, dad of Chaya today, an infectious disease doctor here at Crescent Care.

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And also the lead of our COVID-19 response, worth mentioning. But today, father.

[00:01:25]

Yes. Yes. All right, Chaya. Take it over. Get started. This is you.

[00:01:29]

How will this affect the year coming?

[00:01:32]

I think we don't really know the answer to that yet. For now, we know you guys are going to be out of school at least through April. But I think a lot of us think probably through the rest of the school year. And it's going to be the longest summer ever. For parents! Yes. For parents, definitely longer. But we don't really know what's going to happen with the virus as we go into the summer. Most viruses tend to be less prevalent during the summertime, but we don't really know yet with this virus.

[00:02:08]

How many people have you tested and how many people have come back positive?

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I'll give that one to Dr. Halprin.

[00:02:21]

So great question, Maia. We have tested now just about two hundred and fifty people. So we have a community based response. So we're here in the community. We have some tents that Chaya got to see. People are able to walk up. They could bike up. And then, you know, usually a provider will see the patient and then test them for the COVID virus. So we now have just over 100 results back and around 40 are positive. So we're seeing a pretty good

rate of positivity in our community, around 40 percent. And why it's so important, Maia, that we're testing people is we're able to then say to someone that if they're positive, they could really make decisions so that they do not transmit the virus to any of their loved ones. So if it's someone, let's say, that might have planned to visit their grandma or their older aunt, they might choose not to once we tell them that they're positive. Clearly, we're recommending everyone stay home right now. But being able to tell someone that they have this virus really helps to reinforce that.

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What is the coronavirus?

[00:03:43]

So coronaviruses in general are a big family of viruses and most of them just cause the common cold. But this specific coronavirus is a more severe type of the corona virus. And it started, we know, in December in China and then kind of slowly made its way- well, really pretty quickly made its way- around the globe and started affecting us here.

[00:04:24]

Do you think that children will go back to school this year?

[00:04:26]

I think that it's probably unlikely that kids are gonna go back to school this year. Especially because now our governor here in Louisiana said that we're all going to stay at home at least until April 30th, and that's pretty close to the end of the school year anyways. So I think it's pretty, pretty likely that we're going to be — we're just calling this summer now.

[00:04:56]

What is a virus?

[00:04:58]

Do you want me to take it? Ok, you start and I'll add. So a virus is— I really like to think a virus is kind of the simplest type of parasite. So you probably know a parasite needs something else to survive. So it's a little bit of genetic material, which always is really even hard for me to like— What does that exactly mean? But we're made up of DNA and our proteins are made up of RNA. And this virus is an RNA virus. So I actually think of it as like a little protein out in the world. It can not survive on its own. And that's why we've got to wipe down our tables and so forth. But eventually it just kind of goes away because it needs our cells to make more of itself. So how the coronavirus works is this piece of RNA takes over one of our cells and then it starts making more of itself. And that's in a way why we get sick from it, because our immune system, like what fights things in our body goes after the cells that it's taken over to try and protect us.

[00:06:15]

How does your testing site work?

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So our testing site- Adults come in and they get screened when they come into our parking garage, which is under our building, and we have screeners who ask questions about the symptoms that they're having. And so once they decide they needed to, if they need to be tested, then they head over to the testing area, which is also down in our parking garage. We have some tents set up and we keep everybody very separate from each other so we don't have any germs passing while people are waiting to get tested. Anything else to add?

[00:06:55]

No, that's exactly right.

[00:06:56]

And then the test is a swab of the nose, similar to if any of you have had a flu test. I know Chaya has. It's not always the most comfortable thing. So it's a swab of the nose and then that test gets sent to a special lab and then they get us the results.

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How many testing sites are in the city?

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From what I looked at, there's at least 20 test sites in the city. So kind of spread out throughout New Orleans and probably even a little bit more than that. Those were the ones listed on the city of New Orleans website.

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And they have also on the Louisiana Department of Health, they've put together a really nice spreadsheet so you can look where your neighborhood is and where a testing site might be near you. There might be one in the West Bank, if you live on the West Bank, you go to. And there might be one in Mid-City, if you live in Mid-City. Or if you live in the Lower 9th Ward, 9th Ward and 7th Ward, you can come to see us.

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How long does it take for the results of the tests to come back?

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That's a tough question. So when we do the tests, we send them off and they get sent to a lab all the way in North Carolina. And the test results take a pretty varied amount of time to come back. It can take sometimes a week. Sometimes it just takes a few days. So we're getting some of the test results back today that we did this Monday. So it seems like it may be getting a little bit faster this week, but it's still pretty variable.

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Do you think that you guys will start testing on the weekend?

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That's a great question, Chaya. And right now, I don't think so. I think we are serving a good purpose testing during the week. We have talked about testing on the weekends and how that might be a benefit. But at the moment, I don't think we need to. I think right now, everybody here that works with us, even if they're working from home, is pretty tired and is working really hard during the week. And so our view at this agency is try to give everyone as much rest time on the weekends as they can get. Because we know every week is just really tough, both at work, but also for people at home and in their regular daily lives. So right now, no, but we might consider it.

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And one other thing is that a lot of people are home. So it's it made sense when we first were thinking that we were going to do over the weekend because people would be at work and we didn't foresee the changes that have happened. But now a lot of people are home. So we want to make sure that we can see them when when we're here. And then, as Nick said, having that rest.

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How much longer do you think this will last? Like, how much longer do you think this disease will be hanging over our head?

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Hanging over our head, that's a great way to put it.

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I wish that we knew. I think we would all like to see the light at the end of this tunnel and know when this might end. But we really don't know. We're hoping that by doing all the things that we're doing right now, that at least the disease will be less prevalent. So less people will have it and less people will be able to spread it. But there is a thought that this is going to stick around long-term and be kind of like the flu every year.

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How do you think this started?

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So we think that the virus comes from bats, actually. And so the first place that had it, a place in China called Wuhan, China, a lot of the people that were getting sick had been to a specific animal market in the city. And so the virus has to mutate or change to jump from the bat to the human. So somehow that happened in December, it seems like. And for whatever reason, it happened. And then a lot of people started getting sick. So at some point it had to change again for humans to spread it to each other.

[00:11:46]

Are children's tests for coronavirus different?

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So we actually are not really testing kids in Louisiana right now unless they're really sick in the hospital for even other reasons, not necessarily just from coronavirus. But it is the same kind of test. So goes in just like a flu test in the nose and just like the flu test, basically.

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What are the symptoms for children? Are they different?

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Well, the biggest difference is kids don't seem to have as severe of symptoms and many kids don't even get symptoms. So if, you know, family members are sick with this virus, the kids in the house may not even get symptoms. So the biggest thing is, though, that kids don't get as sick. So you know, if you're accidentally in the room while your parents are watching the news or something, you might hear about people who are really, really sick with this virus. That's a pretty small number of people, but it's an even smaller number for kids. So we don't see that really severe illness in kids, which is great.

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Is there any medication you can take?

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So there's no real treatment for this virus in the way that like if you have an ear infection or strep throat, you might be able to get an antibiotic that makes it get better within a couple of days. There's not really medicine like that for this virus. There are some medicines that doctors are trying in a lot of the adults that are really sick just to, you know, investigate whether or not there's things that might help with their illness.

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What should I do if my parents get sick?

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So first, I don't want you to panic if your parents get sick. Because most often people just kind of have a flu-like illness. So it's not very fun. I want you to bring them whatever they need. Do a little bit of extra housework and listen to them, be extra nice. But I don't want you to panic and worry that, you know, something's going to happen.

[00:14:24]

How many people have recovered from coronavirus?

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Good question! That's a great question, Maya. You know, it's hard to say for sure right now. The good news and what we do know is that most people do recover, at least 80 percent. So really it's a small percent that are getting really, really sick. The problem is the small percent that are getting really, really sick are really sick. And so we want to protect them as much as possible and have them stay safe. And that's why we're all trying to stay home. That's why you guys are out of school. Because even though kids don't get as sick— which is really honestly one of the best things ever— it would be even worse if you guys got sick. If you're not that sick, you could still spread it to other people, which is why they closed the schools down. And like all the playgrounds here in New Orleans are roped off and stuff like that, which is not very much fun because my kids, I know see it and they want to go. But, you know, we just want to prevent it from spreading to the people who might get sick. But the good majority people recover and do well. I don't have an exact number. I don't know if Dr. Halprin or Dr. Cragin do. But the majority. So that's good news.

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Is this the only coronavirus? If not, what are the others?

[00:15:42]

So there are lots of different types of coronaviruses. It's a big family of viruses. And for the most part, they are just common cold viruses. So we see it in kids a lot in the wintertime. At our children's hospital here, they do testing for viruses in kids that go into the hospital or go into the E.R. pretty frequently. And so they'll see it come up a lot, but it's not the same exact type of coronavirus. So there's a few coronaviruses in history that have caused this more severe illness. And the previous two mostly stayed kind of local to where they were started. So in China, in the Middle East. And so this is the third kind of major one that has caused this more severe problem.

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Why is the disease being called COVID-19?

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Yeah, I love these questions! So, you know, the 19 stands for 2019 when it was first found, as Dr. Cragin mentioned, in Wuhan, China. You know, a lot of people call it the novel- meaning "new", it's not like a book- the novel, new Coronavirus-19. So that's why it's NOCOVID-19 to recognize that it's a newer coronavirus that was found in 2019. It's really important, the names of viruses, and what's really essential to bring up also is that there's been some concern when it first was called the "Wuhan China virus", that was really inappropriate. You know, a virus, as I explained what it is before, it could come from anywhere. So it's really important that we think how this might affect different populations. And when the virus first came over, there were some people that weren't eating in Chinese restaurants or things that were really inappropriate. So we always have to remember that we're all kind of one human family in this together. And that's a really, really important lesson from this.

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And to answer your question specifically, I Googled it just to make sure. So full disclosure. So the CO stands for Coronavirus, VI stands for virus, and D stands for disease. So when you say the sickness that people get, that's the disease, you'd call it COVID. If you're talking about the actual virus itself, you'd say the novel Coronavirus or there's a more complicated SARS-COV II name for it. But COVID is CO (corona) VI (virus) D (disease). COVID.

[00:18:45]

See, I totally learned that, actually, right now. I learned something. So thank you, Maia. I mean, I always thought it was like Coronavirus, novel Coronavirus, and they're just shortening it. But yes, the disease. Thank you. Well, that is all Google.

[00:19:00]

Will this be like the flu and come around seasonally? But be tamed?

[00:19:04]

We think possibly. We don't really know, though. So there's some thought that it will become a more seasonal virus. Right now, though, this is not really the time of year that we usually see flu virus or other winter viruses. So it's really hard to tell right now because the virus is so prevalent and spreading still so rapidly. So we have to wait and see what happens over the next year to be able to tell.

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Why are we seeing a rise in cases?

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That's a great question, Maia. So here in Louisiana, as the other two docs explained earlier, it took a while to get the tests here and it takes a while to get the test results. So some of the rise in cases is actually that people were already sick with it. We just are now finding out about it because it's taken so long to get the results back on some people. Because when we started doing testing, it was March 5th, we could do the testing in some of our partner labs where they mail it all to North Carolina. They really, I mean, they weren't ready as much for the huge number of tests that people were doing. And so some of what we're seeing now is just kind of all the people that were tested before, we're getting their results back finally. Some of it is just that it spread here very quickly. A lot of people think Mardi Gras, when a lot of people came together in New Orleans, you know, when we all got together, we all crowd, we all cheer for the parades. Like that's was also a trigger for a lot of people to start spreading it. And slowly it spread to the state of Louisiana, in other areas, too, Not blaming Mardi Gras. We didn't know. I mean, it's no one's fault. And it's not our city's fault either, I think it's important to say. But like any other gathering, the virus doesn't care. It could be Spring Break. It could be a big party. It could be anything.

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And this is where the social distancing is so important. And washing your hands. You know, in the areas that people are really following the recommendations, we're starting to see less cases. So there's been some nice reports about Seattle who really were kind of ahead of the curve. Now, they also had a lot of cases, but they're starting to see many less cases. I'm really hoping that we start seeing that soon in New Orleans.

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All right. I think those are their questions. Do you have anything else? Those were great questions.

[00:21:57]

Yeah. Does viruses have color?

[00:22:00]

Oh, I got a preview about this one. I didn't know the answer.

[00:22:05]

I have no idea the answer to this.

[00:22:07]

I had to Google it. I had to Google the fact that viral particles - and thank you, Chaya, for teaching me this- are so small that they don't maintain color. That when you see online all the colors and the nice, exciting colors, that's us adding them to this make some distinctions between the components of the virus.

[00:22:35]

I would have thought it was gold because a lot of the pictures. It's named Coronavirus because it's got these little particles that come off of it that look like little crowns. And I think in the pictures, they always put them as gold so that your brain sees gold. You think of a crown and then you think Corona, for crown. But apparently that was wrong. So it is not gold.

[00:22:59]

Doesn't it... I've seen pictures in dark pink and green.

[00:23:01]

Yeah, it's how they do these little... I think they do it to help you because we see the different colors, of the different bright colors at least, maybe to help see the different parts of the virus. But yeah you're right, they do mean all kinds of different pretty colors even though it's not a very pretty virus.

[00:23:18]

I have one more question. Since you guys are doing the testing here, has like all the goggles and masks and the gloves actually kept you guys safe.

[00:23:31]

That's a great question. So, yes, so there's recommendations- and you'll see this a lot- it's called PPE or Personal

Protective Equipment. And that's the recommendations of what you should wear. So you might see we kind of wear these little space suits downstairs and then we have gloves and we have goggles. And then we also wear these special masks, this being one. And this is the recommendation for health professionals to be able to take care of people because it's so important we continue our work and people need to be taken care of. But we do so to protect ourselves as best as we can. You also might know there's a lot of debate in the country on the fact that we might have some limited supplies of these. So we have to be really thoughtful on how we use them and then really making sure everyone has access to what they need in the hospitals and in the clinics.

[00:24:31]

Thank you so much.

[00:24:35]

Thank you, guys. This was great. I like having the kids take over. Y'all have wonderful questions and we will get this posted for y'all to listen to.

[00:24:45]

Thanks, girls. You were fantastic. You are awesome. All right.

[00:24:47]

Bye bye, Maia, Chaya, Dr. Cragin and Dr. Halprin. Thank you for joining us today. And we'll be back tomorrow. All right, bye y'all.

END OF TRANSCRIPT



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