

COLE MANOR

HEALTHY COMET

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Special Edition: Living Through a Pandemic

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Being a nurse during COVID

When patients come to the hospital with COVID, a lot of them are scared, said Ms. Lorraine Brown, an emergency department nurse at Einstein Medical Center Philadelphia.

Ms. Brown recently told the *Healthy Comet* that “because of the pandemic, hospitals don’t let patients have visitors.” Because of the virus, she said, the doctors and nurses need to wear a lot of personal protection equipment—which is called PPE, for short.

The PPE covers people’s faces. That can be scary for patients, Ms. Brown said. She said doctors and nurses have found ways to solve this problem. Some nurses and doctors wear pictures of themselves on their gowns so that patients can see what they look like. She also said that they wear identification badges with their names and pictures.

Nurses like Ms. Brown work with many people including doctors, respiratory therapists, pharmacists, support service, environmental services, people

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Illustration by Kaeley Cazares

Answers about COVID and viruses

Editor’s note: Healthy Comet reporters recently interviewed Lorraine Brown about her experiences taking care of COVID-19 patients. She is a nurse at Einstein Medical Center Philadelphia. Her answers have been lightly edited and shortened.

How does your body contract the virus?

Answer: One thing we know is that the virus can be contracted by the air we breathe. The virus itself is little particles that hang in the air. If someone with it coughs or sneezes someone else can breathe it in. Also if those particles land on surfaces (tables, computers, phones) and you touch it and then touch your face, you can contract it.

Q: How do you know if you have COVID?

A: You don’t know until you have the test done, but you can have symptoms like fever, cough, sore throat, muscle aches, abdominal pain, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, chills, loss of taste or smell, and shortness of breath or difficulty breathing.

Q. How do you feel when you have the virus?

You can feel very tired or weak. You might not have the energy to do what you normally can do like getting groceries out of the car or walking up the stairs. You might lose your taste or ability to smell.

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Caring for patients during COVID

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who clean the hospital, nutritionists, and security guards. It is like being on a team, she said.

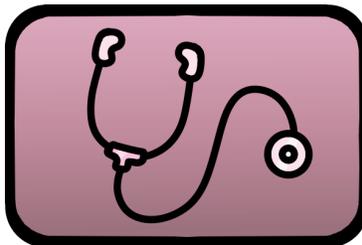
“We talk and create a ‘plan for care’ for the patients,” said Ms. Brown. Teamwork is important because several people working together will take care of the patients in the best way possible, she said.

“Working by yourself you can go far, but you can go even farther with a team of people,” she said.

Like other people, nurses can feel nervous about getting the virus.

“I try not to let my fear be bigger than my goal,” Ms. Brown said. She focuses on her goal of caring for the patients to suppress her fear of getting the virus.

Hospitals have had to get creative with how they care for patients. They have had to figure out how to care for a large number of patients in a short amount



of time. They’ve had to use spaces to care for patients that they did not use before, Ms. Brown said.

For example, the emergency room is usually a place where a patient stays for a short time before they go somewhere else in the hospital. During COVID, some patients have had to stay in the

emergency room for two or three days because there were no other spaces for them to go, Ms. Brown said.

She also said that compassion is really important when caring for people who are having the worst day of their life. They are often alone because their family members aren’t allowed to visit because of the virus.

Ms. Brown said nurses show compassion by holding hands with a patient, talking with patients, and even using their cell phones to make FaceTime calls so that patients can see family.

—By Healthy Comet staff

Why wearing masks is important

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Q. How effective is wearing a mask to prevent the spread of the coronavirus?

A: HUGE. ... If we are both wearing our masks, what I breathe out, you don’t breathe in.



Q. How long do you work at the hospital and how do you stay awake?

A: I work 12 hour shifts. That’s half a day. I work at night when most people are sleeping. There’s a lot of excitement at the hospital so I don’t have a lot of time for my body to get sleepy. We drink coffee. But taking care of patients

is a big deal so we don’t get sleep because there’s a lot going on.

Reflecting on a crazy year

My dream is to go back to school because I don't like online school. It stinks and it is just so bad. And I would like to see my friends in person and have lunch with my friends. I think online stinks. The feedback is so annoying.

—By Neveah Jones

One of my dreams is to move to Las Vegas with my family. I want to do this after the pandemic so I can meet my favorite YouTuber Chad Wild Clay.

—By Ryan Ritter

The biggest challenge was wearing a mask because it makes your nose itchy and you are breathing in your own air. Trying to stay safe was also a challenge because it was possible to get sick. The greatest reward was spending more time with my family.

—By Braelynn Baker

I want to go to Virginia. My family was supposed to go to Virginia over Spring Break like we did in 2019.

—By Daniel Fuller

Cole Manor Healthy Comet

The *Healthy Comet* is a publication of Cole Manor Elementary School in the Norristown Area School District. Fourth grade student staff members include Catherine Arena, Jose Arteaga-Moreno, Braelynn Baker, Mayar Baoum, Landon Barnett, Elliot Bartlett, Kaeley Cazares, Hanna Chen, Evelyn Deskins, Gino Falco, Teagan Farrell, Daniel Fuller, Camila Zarate Garcia, Neveah Jones, Melanie Merchant-Rojas, Dayana Blas Reyes, Ryan Ritter, Kira Ryan, Alba Aria Salgado, and Vanessa Valentin-Robinson. The *Healthy Comet’s* faculty advisor is Ms. Rathgeb. Dr. Poncheri is Cole Manor’s school principal.

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