BBAHC is closely monitoring the spread of Coronavirus or Covid-19 in the United States and especially in Alaska.

Why is this virus such a big deal? This virus, which appears to have spread from animals to humans, is not a virus we humans have seen before, so we don’t have immunity to it.

It is especially hard to know exactly what to do, since this is a new virus and we don’t know all the information about it, like how long you can pass the virus around, or how long the virus can live on surfaces.

Here’s what we do know.

The disease it causes is mild, like a cold, in up to 80% of people who get it, moderate, with fever, cough and shortness of breath in 15% people, and can be life threatening in up to 5%.

The virus is spread by droplets that spray out of sick people when they cough or sneeze.

There is no vaccine for this yet, and the best way to avoid getting it is to avoid sick people, crowds, wash your hands frequently, and don’t touch your face, since you can spread the virus from droplets into your eyes, nose, or mouth, where it take up residence and start to use your own body’s cells to make more of the virus.

If you have a high fever, a cough and are feeling short of breath, call the Kanakaknak ER at 842-9244 before you come in to be seen so we can prepare for you. If you are coming to the outpatient department to be seen, please call 842-9369 first so we can suggest a time you can be most promptly seen.

When you arrive, you will be asked questions about your symptoms and asked to put on a mask if you are having respiratory symptoms so that if you cough or sneeze, you don’t spread the virus.

KNK is following the current Alaska state epidemiology recommendations for testing for coronavirus, which include testing for influenza. It’s important to get your flu shot if you haven’t already, since flu is far more common and is actually in Bristol Bay.

As we learn more, we will tell you.