

# MAY 11-CORONAVIRUS OFFICE POLICY UPDATE

We now have over 11,000 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Minnesota, over 1,350,000 in the US and more than 4,000,000 Worldwide. Many of the newly reported cases in Minnesota are from people without a known COVID-19 exposure. This means the number of people infected with COVID-19 is much larger than have been confirmed by testing for the virus. We also know that patients with COVID-19, even children, are most contagious and can transmit the disease several days before showing any signs or symptoms of the disease. That is why this virus has spread so quickly because patients are transmitting disease before they feel sick enough to isolate themselves. The implications of this is that ANY person could be potentially capable of spreading disease, even if they do not feel ill. To protect yourself and family, especially adults over 50-60 please practice extreme social distancing. If possible, have your children avoid contact (other than Facetime) with grandparents. You and your family may (and should) go outside for walks or exercise but do not meet up with other families and keep at least 6 feet distance between you and others while outside. Cover your cough, wash your hands often for at least 20 seconds with soap and water.

## Office Visits

In order to protect our patients, their families and our staff, the following office visit policies will be in effect:

1. Well Child Care (WCC) visits are being gradually expanded to include children of all ages by June 1. All WCC visits are being scheduled in the morning and early afternoon with other patients who are not ill. The American Academy of Pediatrics and Children's Hospital of Minnesota Infectious Disease experts advise us to keep up with immunizations for all children to avoid risks of other preventable diseases that could reoccur if we avoid immunizing. If you have a child who is due for a WCC visit and don't already have an appointment scheduled, please call the office to schedule an appointment.
2. Sick Visits: patients who wish to schedule an appointment will be offered a Telemedicine visit with a provider. If the provider deems an office visit will be needed you will be able to schedule an appointment for a sick visit in the afternoon. No Walk-In visits will be available at this time.
3. Pre-Op exams may now be scheduled as elective surgeries will be resumed soon. If your child is scheduled for a surgery please call for a Pre-Op appointment.

## At Your Next Office Visit

If you are scheduled to see a provider in the clinic, follow the new clinic visit guidelines outlined below:

- Do not come in to the office before 2:30 if you or your child is ill-Instead call the office for guidance on when to come in for your visit.
- We are no longer allowing Walk-In visits or Walk-In Strep tests- Please call office for a Telemedicine visit if necessary, to determine the appropriate plan.
- We ask that only one parent/guardian accompany the child during the visit (except Newborn WCC visits when both parents may attend). If you have other children, it would be best to leave them with someone at home or have them stay with an adult in the car during the office visit. This will help us to prevent the spread of coronavirus.

- When you arrive at our office, do not come inside. Please park in the parking lot, stay in your car, and call our office to let us know you have arrived.
- When you arrive and call, please tell us the patient's name and date of birth. Also provide a current phone number so we can call/text you when we are ready to bring you into the patient rooms.
- Hopefully you will have received an email with any paperwork that you need to fill out a few days prior to your visit. Please return the completed forms by email prior to your appointment.
- Remove all extra clothing and leave unnecessary bags/toys/other belongings in the car.
- We will call/text you when we are ready to bring you to your room. At that time come into the office and one of our staff will greet you in the waiting room to bring you directly to your exam room.
- Please wear a mask that covers your nose and mouth to the appointment. If your child is over 2 years old, he or she should also wear a mask.
- If you have a copay, this will be collected by the staff person who brings you to your room.
- Your nurse and provider will visit you in the exam room. After your visit is over, if you need a follow up appointment please call to schedule a follow-up visit to avoid prolonged time in office and at the front desk.
- When you are finished, you and your child can walk directly out of the office back to your car. Please do not stop at the front desk on your way out.

**Pediatric Services have taken extra precautions to make ensure your safety:**

- Children and caregivers will be assessed for COVID-19 risk via phone or via telemedicine visit prior to being allowed into the office for a visit. If deemed to be at risk, patients will not be allowed into the office.
- If you call and your child has a cough and fever or other COVID-19 symptoms, you will be offered a scheduled time for a video telemedicine appointment that will be charged to your insurance company.
- Only completely well children will be seen in the mornings and all sick visits are in the afternoon in an effort to not expose children who are in the office for non-illness related visits. If you are scheduled for a morning appointment and the patient or parent are sick you will be asked to reschedule.
- Exam rooms are cleaned and left unoccupied for a period of time after each visit.
- You may see clinicians in scrubs.
- Our staff will be wearing masks, glasses and gloves within 6 feet of all patient contact.
- We prefer that you and your child over age 2 wear a mask to help prevent the spread of your germs to others. If you don't come with your own mask, please take only one mask, they are in limited supply and it is difficult to restock at this time.
- We have removed all books and toys from our waiting area and rooms.
- Lollipops and stickers are behind the desk for the staff to hand out after your visit
- No office staff will come to work sick. Staff are surveyed and temp taken before starting work each day.
- We are sensitive to the generation at greatest risk and prefer all people over the age of 60 stay home.

As always, if you have questions or concerns, please call or send a message through our patient portal.

Our office hours are not changing; we will be here during all regularly scheduled clinic hours if you need to be seen in the office. Our phones are still available via the answering service 24 hours a day at 952-922-4200.

We apologize for any inconvenience and appreciate your understanding and cooperation. These changes are designed to keep all of our patients, their families and our staff safe as we strive to provide you with the very best care!

### COVID-19 INFORMATION

Good news: coronavirus usually causes mild illness in most people but especially in children. The most common symptoms are fever and cough but also could have runny nose, body aches, sore throat, rashes, vomiting and diarrhea. Many children have no symptoms at all. If your child has any of the above symptoms and you think may have coronavirus, you probably will not need to visit our clinic, but should call to schedule a Telemedicine visit. Most people who are sick do not need to be tested. There is no specific medicine to treat COVID-19, so whether you test positive or negative, management of your illness will be the same. Also, individuals who are not sick should not be tested even if they have been exposed to COVID-19. In Minnesota, we are past the point where testing will help contain the epidemic, there are too many confirmed and unconfirmed cases circulating now. Testing when not needed or not helpful in the management uses up desperately needed supplies that the hospitals will need to combat those who are seriously ill in the hospital. Transmission of virus can occur up to 10 days after the start of illness so if you have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or have any of the symptoms of COVID-19 be sure to immediately isolate your child and yourself for at least 10 days after the start of symptoms AND in addition for at least 72 hours after resolution of symptoms including fever (without the use of fever reducing medication) and improvement in cough. If you are exposed to anyone with COVID19 or anyone who has symptoms of COVID-19 you should isolate yourself for 14 days which is the known incubation period of the virus.

Primary reasons your child will need a sick-visit appointment in the office are

- Any fever (>100.4F) in a baby under 60 days
- Respiratory distress, increased work of breathing, or cough that interferes with sleep or play
- Dehydration signs
- Fever above 100.4 rectal for more than 4 days

#### IMPORTANT INFORMATION TO NOTE:

- COVID-19 contagiousness is highest in very close contact- distances of more than 6 feet that are not prolonged do not carry a very high risk.
- The vast majority of people who get coronavirus will have mild symptoms - fever, dry cough, headache and fatigue- gone in a day or two. The treatment is supportive. This means fever reducers, pain control and lots of fluid and rest and some chicken soup.
- Look for shortness of breath and respiratory difficulty which should be reported immediately.
- Transmission can occur for up to 14 days after having the illness, stay quarantined for at least 2 weeks.
- Currently we are unable to test for COVID-19 in our clinic. Availability of testing is variable in the Metro area; we can help you decide if testing is appropriate after a Telemedicine visit. In most cases test results take 2-4 days to be available, so that does not help us in deciding how to approach anyone with symptoms of the disease. Current Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) recommendations are

that any patient with fever, cough or cold symptoms assume they may have COVID-19 and to be quarantined at home for minimum of 10 days as noted above.

- Children should be kept away from elderly and immunocompromised people as much as possible for the time being as they may carry and spread it to our most vulnerable population.
- If your child has asthma and has inhalers- please have your inhalers on hand and start them when they are sick as you normally would.
- We advise against all unnecessary travel at this time. It has been generally advised by the MDH to avoid all non-essential travel. Keep in mind any travel may be significantly disrupted at any destination. Also, many are recommending a 14-day quarantine upon returning from high-risk areas. Look to reliable sources of information such as the CDC, WHO and MDH.
- If your child was "potentially" exposed to COVID-19 or around someone who has been exposed it is probably wise to be cautious and quarantine your child for at least 14 days.
- Schools have closed and the MDH is recommending to keep kids away from each other which would include playdates, activities, malls, and playdates, etc. Please be very strict with your children about this recommendation. Otherwise it defeats the purpose of closing schools to limit transmission of the coronavirus.

Please stay tuned to our social channels and website for up-to-date changes. This is a rapidly evolving situation and our efforts to provide you the safest and most effective care will continue. We are confident we will be able to work through the next several months together as a caring community. Stay calm. Stay safe. Cover your cough and go wash your hands, often!