

Dear Patients and Families,

With back to school, we are again facing a surge of cases of COVID-19. We would like to take this chance to clarify our office procedures that we have in place for in office visits in order to minimize exposure to our staff and to our patients. We are still strictly adhering to the guidelines of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).

BEFORE YOUR VISIT

If you are coming in for a **physical, shots, or recheck appointment**, and your child or any family member in the household is having any sick symptoms such as cough, congestion, sore throat, fever, fatigue, etc., or anyone in your household is quarantining due to COVID-19, call our office before coming in. We may need to reschedule your appointment or change it to a sick visit.

If you are coming in for a **sick visit or for testing** following an exposure to COVID-19, park your car and call the front desk from the parking lot. We will instruct you when to meet us at the office door so the nurse can bring you directly into a room. We ask that you do not enter the main waiting area as we strive to keep that space for well patients who are waiting for well visits. We may ask you to wait in your car until a room is prepared for you. We sanitize each room between patients and this may take a few minutes.

FOR YOUR VISIT

Masks will be required for all patients over the age of 2 and all parents without exception, as recommended by the CDC. If you do not arrive with a mask, you will be given one by the front desk. Your mask must be worn over your nose and mouth at all times, including while waiting for the provider in the exam room.

We ask that **only one parent accompany the patient** to each visit in order to facilitate social distancing as much as possible. The only exceptions are newborn less than 30 days old and parents who are disabled and require assistance.

AFTER AN EXPOSURE

WHEN TO TEST

Testing is recommended for any patients who have symptoms of COVID-19. Testing is also recommended for patients who were exposed to COVID-19 but have no symptoms on or after day 5 of exposure. Testing is also recommended if your child was exposed to COVID-19 and begins to show symptoms before day 5.

QUARANTINE

Quarantine is recommended by the CDC following an exposure (close contact, defined as 15 minutes over a 24 hour period within a 6 foot diameter of someone who is sick or develops symptoms or tests positive within 48 hours of contact).

The recommended quarantine period continues to be 14 days following date of exposure. This may be shortened to 10 days without a test or 7 days with a negative test on or after day 5. **We will not write a letter clearing any patient to return to school prior to day 8 following exposure.**

TESTING POSITIVE

If your child tests positive for COVID-19, he or she must isolate themselves for 10 days starting the day of the positive test. The CDC does not currently have any recommendation to end isolation earlier than 10 days. **The soonest that we will be able to clear a patient to return to school is on day 11 following a positive test.**

RETURNING TO SCHOOL/WORK

We are aware that some schools in our area have their own protocols for returning to school. However, we cannot recommend anything outside of the CDC guidelines.

We are able to test your child again for COVID-19 if they need a negative result to return to school or work. It must meet the guidelines outlined above under QUARANTINE or TESTING POSITIVE. We are only able to give a copy of the negative test to give to the school. However, we will not write any letters for clearance to return before quarantine or isolation periods are completed.

MASKS

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the American Academy of Pediatrics recommend masking for all individuals age 2 and up. We advise that patients follow these guidelines when in public indoor locations and any crowded outdoor locations. This includes in schools.

If your child's school has a mask mandate this should be followed. **We will not be providing mask exemption letters for any patient.**

COVID-19 VACCINES

We recommend vaccination against COVID-19 for any patient aged 12 and up. Vaccination continues to be the best way to prevent severe illness and hospitalization due to COVID-19 infection. We hope that there will soon be a vaccine available for our younger patients. However, until then we cannot recommend any off-label use of vaccines for our patients under the age of 12 years old.

COVID-19 TREATMENTS

We will not prescribe any medical treatments that are not FDA approved to treat COVID-19 or its symptoms.

We appreciate all of our patients and their families helping us to keep our staff, schools, and communities safe. We hope that all of our patients and their families continue to be healthy and look forward to seeing you in the office for well visits.

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Links for other information/resources:

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/COVID-19/Pages/Cloth-Face-Coverings-for-Children-During-COVID-19.aspx>

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/COVID-19/Pages/Mask-Mythbusters.aspx>

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/quarantine-isolation.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fif-you-are-sick%2Fquarantine.html