

## **TO OUR PATIENTS:**

**PLEASE READ THIS ENTIRE COMMUNICATION FOR IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING COVID-19 AND WHAT OUR CLINIC IS DOING TO MANAGE IT.**

**UPDATES TO THIS INFORMATION WILL BE POSTED ON OUR WEBSITE IN THIS DOCUMENT UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.**

**Effective immediately, our clinic has moved to virtual/telephone care**, with the exception of those who have essential (as defined by the clinician) needs for in-person care. You may continue to book telephone appointments by calling. In-person appointment will be arranged only after telephone assessment by a nurse or doctor. Please cooperate with screening at multiple stages, if it is deemed essential that you come into the clinic. **Please be honest and up front about your symptoms and exposure history so you do not put our office staff or others at risk.**

## **XRAYS AND LAB**

The lab and xray departments are closed. If you require URGENT LABS OR XRAYS please call our reception desk.

We ask patients to bear with us if we experience staffing shortages. We will continue to make every effort to maintain our office services as much as possible, with the minimum disruption to your care. We may be slower to answer phone calls or messages. Our staff are very dedicated to continuing to provide the care you need. It will just look a little different than usual.

## **How to Prevent the Spread of Coronavirus Infections:**

### **STAY HOME, SAVE LIVES**

Be rationale and keep yourself informed

**DO NOT TRAVEL-** If you have recently returned from travel you are asked to self-isolate for 2 weeks.

**PRACTICE SOCIAL DISTANCING** - Avoid social gatherings and crowds. If you have to get together with people, do so in open areas if possible and do your best to stay at least 2 metres (6 feet) away from others. Work from home if you are able.

**WASH YOUR HANDS, DO NOT TOUCH YOUR FACE-**COVID-19 is thought to be spread via "droplets", which means that close contact with those who are infected will put you at risk. Droplets are spread from infected patients when they cough, sneeze, or breathe. The most common way for them to enter your body is when you touch your face (eyes, nose and mouth) with contaminated hands. The best way to wash your hands is with soap and water for 20 seconds. Hand sanitizer doesn't work as well but is better than nothing. Wearing gloves is not recommended for the general public, as it often gives people a false sense of security and they become lax with their hand hygiene, thinking the gloves will protect them.

Please see our website for printable instructions on how to self-monitor for COVID19 symptoms, how to self-isolate post travel or if in contact with someone diagnosed with COVID19, and how to care for someone with COVID19. Please also see our links to Ontario public health.

**IF YOU THINK YOU HAVE CORONAVIRUS:**

The symptoms of COVID-19 significantly overlap with many other respiratory viruses so it will be increasingly difficult to know who has it and who doesn't.

**COVID19 Symptoms:**

Almost Always	Common	Sometimes
• Fever	• Fatigue	• Nausea
• Cough	• Muscle Aches	• Vomiting
• Difficulty breathing	• Sore throat	• Diarrhea
	• Headache	• Pneumonia
	• Decreased appetite	• Kidney failure
	• Runny nose	

**MILD SYMPTOMS**

- Stay home, rest, drink plenty of fluids
- Over-the-counter cough and cold meds can help with symptom relief (if it is safe for you to take them), but remember to send someone else to get them for you so you don't expose others to the infection you have.
- Humidifiers and ample hydration are also important.
- **Cough and sneeze into your sleeve and wash your hands frequently** to prevent spread.
- You and your household contacts may also choose to wear masks to prevent transmission amongst yourselves

**SEVERE SYMPTOMS: please go to the EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT of your nearest hospital.** Do not come to our doctor's office or go to a walk-in clinic. We are not equipped to safely see and assess you without putting ourselves or our other patients at risk. **If you have a complex health condition, ie. COPD, diabetes, heart disease or are immunosuppressed, you may experience more severe symptoms, and may need to be assessed in an emergency department setting.**

**COVID19 testing:**

Visit [Hamilton Public Health Services' website](#) to learn more about who should be tested. You can also call (905) 546-2424 ext. 7970 to speak with their Infectious Diseases Program staff. Only patients who meet provincial criteria will be tested for COVID-19.

Coronavirus 19 (COVID-19) has officially reached pandemic status. It's only a matter of time until we start to see local spread. When children and young people get COVID-19, they may have no symptoms or very mild symptoms. Despite this, they can still transmit the virus. Older patients and those with poorly functioning immune and respiratory systems seem to be at highest risk of severe and critical infections. **Please maintain social distancing no matter how well you or others are, and self-isolate if you have ANY symptoms.**

**Thank you for your cooperation and understanding! We will continue to keep you informed as we learn more about this pandemic. In the meantime, please do your part to help keep us all safe.**