



Dear parents,

We understand the growing concern surrounding the coronavirus (COVID-19), and have been forced to make significant changes to our practice in the past month due to this pandemic. The health and safety of our patients and staff remain our top priority, as well as reducing the spread of the virus in our community.

Based on current guidance and our own specific circumstances, we remain open and ready to assist you however we can, though our ability to see your child in clinic may be limited.

**WE ARE NOW OFFERING TELEMEDICINE CONSULTS. PLEASE CALL OUR OFFICE IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SCHEDULE A VIRTUAL VISIT.**

#### **Patients with Upcoming Well Appointments:**

Babies and toddlers 2 years and under are encouraged to still come in for their well exams and immunizations, assuming they are otherwise healthy and well. We will consider preventive visits for older children based on your individual circumstances, but generally feel these should be rescheduled to a later date.

Due to exposure risks, we request only one caregiver should accompany patients at this time, and if possible, keeping siblings at home.

We kindly request you leave snacks and beverages at home. Breastfeeding and bottlefeeding are always welcome in our office.

#### **Consults for Non-Infectious Concerns:**

We will still consider scheduling appointments for children and adolescents with concerns that are not likely to be related to infection, (such as mental health concerns, developmental delays, eczema, chronic abdominal pain, etc.). It is also possible that we can address these concerns through a telemedicine consult, reducing your family's potential exposure in our clinic.

Please call our office to discuss which option will be best for your family.

### Sick Visits:

Children may have a wide variety of symptoms due to COVID-19. Given our inability to rapidly identify and isolate these patients, we are unable to see children in clinic with sick symptoms. We may recommend that your child be seen in an urgent care or the Emergency Department, or we may be able to complete a visit virtually by telemedicine. Our staff will discuss your child's symptoms with Dr. Hawley or Dr. Macdonald and we will determine the best plan of care for your family.

### Our Higher Risk Patients:

We are advocating social distancing for *all* of our patients, but for our patients with underlying health concerns, limiting possible exposure is essential. Please keep your child at home if at all possible. We advise no play dates or social gatherings, (even with fewer than 10 attendees), at this time.

### COVID-19 Testing:

At this time, we are not testing for COVID-19 in our office. If there is an indication for your child to be tested, we can coordinate care with providers who are able to test. Please contact us first to discuss your child's concerns before heading to another facility for testing.

### The Clinic:

We have modified our entrance and waiting area to reduce contact between our patients and those of Sound Family Health. Please follow the signs to the back entrance, and you will promptly be brought into the clinic. We do not have a receptionist at the front.

Also, our staff has been trained in infection control measures, standard precautions, and hand hygiene. While this is the daily practice in our clinic, we are even more attentive to ensuring a safe environment.

### Prevention, Treatment, and Social Distancing:

We support and are personally following the recommendations set forth by the CDC and our state government to reduce the spread of the virus. As much as possible, stay home! Be diligent in your hand hygiene and cautious in your social interactions. Limiting non-essential contact with older adults or people with compromised health is advised.

Though this is a serious situation, please try not to panic. Stress negatively affects your body, including your own immune health. Children also easily perceive parental anxiety, and are looking to you for guidance and stability in this unusual time. Consider the following to help you and your family work through your fears:

- Spend time outside! Play in the yard, go for a walk on the beach, or take a hike.
- Limit screen time, (and that includes you!). This is the perfect time to strengthen family relationships by playing board games, listening or dancing to music, singing, playing hide and seek or tag and laughing together!
- Get adequate sleep.
- Eat whole foods, including lots of vegetables and fruits. Drink plenty of water and try out some new herbal teas.
- Practice mindfulness. Be hopeful and positive.
- Check in with vulnerable friends, family, and neighbors and (safely) help them as possible. Caring for others is a proven way to reduce anxiety!

Many of our families are interested in natural ways to prevent and treat infections and may be curious about the use of supplements with coronavirus. The guidance may vary depending on the specific supplement and the individual health risk factors of your child.

*If you are interested in discussing your child's supplements, preventive or treatment measures, or risk factors relating to coronavirus, please consider scheduling a telehealth consult.*

#### **Staying Current:**

Dr. Hawley and Dr. Macdonald have been reading constantly to stay up to date. We communicate and share experience with our colleagues in the community. We are keeping up with and following the recommendations of the CDC, WHO, state and local health departments.

We will be updating this information as new details become available. If you have questions or concerns about this information, please do not hesitate to call.

In health,

Sound Pediatrics