

TO ALL OUR PATIENTS:

There is a lot of uncertainty about the spreading of Coronavirus in our area, and the impact it will have on our health and on our way of life.

At Peds Care, we have to be ahead of the presentation of any potential cases of COVID_19, otherwise known as Coronavirus in the office, to protect all the patients and our own personnel.

With that purpose, we have established the following changes:

1. Most routine physical examinations will be conducted only in the morning hours. **No sick visits will be done at this time.**
2. Sick visits will be done in the afternoon. We will ask you to call for an appointment. A triage nurse will speak with a Provider to determine if your child needs to come in for a visit or if we can treat your child over the phone to a telemedicine visit.
3. Telemedicine visits are a very good option in order to prevent potential cross-contamination with the virus. The nurse will determine when she speaks with you if it would be safer for you to do a telemedicine visit than you coming to the office depending on your child's symptoms and past medical history.
4. During this crisis, **please DO NOT walk-in to be seen.** You can potentially contaminate other patients.
5. Please bring only ONE adult with the patient. If at all possible, we ask you not bring other siblings to the office. More people in the waiting room increases the chances of spreading the disease. As possible, advanced aged family members should not come to appointments.

We know these measures could produce some discomfort and may alter some of your plans; however, the health and safety of the community is our top priority during these uncertain times. As we receive more directives from the Department of Community Health and the CDC, we may change or modify these interventions.

Please call our office if you have any questions.

Why it is Important for Parents to Maintain Well-child visits especially when immunizations are Due April 1, 2020

To our Parents:

On behalf of everyone at Peds Care, P.C., we hope you and your family are keeping well during these strange and uncertain times.

COVID-19 has disrupted our lives and we know you have questions about how to protect and care for your children during these uncertain times. Today, we want to provide answers to some important questions:

1) I'm being told to Shelter-In-Place. Should my children still go to their well-visits and get their vaccines?

Vaccines are very important, especially for young children under the age of 2 years. Vaccines preventable diseases can cause serious infections and may even cause death. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, we need to make sure our most vulnerable patients are protected against these illnesses. Some vaccines require multiple doses to build up your baby's immunity. If vaccination rates fall, your children could be at risk for these preventable diseases. Kids can even be at risk for these diseases while remaining at home as some viruses are transmitted through dirt and others may be carried by adults who don't show any symptoms. Receiving vaccines will not compromise your child's ability to fight infections from illnesses, including COVID-19.

In addition to providing vaccines, your doctor will weigh and measure your child. It is important to follow a baby's growth pattern to ensure that any issues are caught early, before they become a health problem. Visits also include discussions about important developmental milestones, sleep, and bowel habits, which are critical for a healthy, growing child.

Please call our office for recommendations about whether your child should come in for their well visit appointment. Together, we can weigh the risks of exposure to illness against the benefits of these important immunizations.

2) What if my child gets sick with something other than COVID-19 or has other physical or mental health concerns?

The most important thing to do if your child is sick is to call your Pediatrician. Don't overlook health concerns because of COVID-19. Your doctor will let you know if your child needs to be seen. They may even recommend a Telemedicine visit, allowing your child to be seen by a doctor without leaving home. Many doctors are now seeing sick patients virtually through Facetime, Facebook Messenger, Skype, Zoom and other modalities. Minimizing the number of children coming into the office makes it safer for the patients who do need to be seen in person. Please do not let your sick child get sicker at home because you are afraid to come into the office. Be sure

to call our office and get advice. Remember, you and your Pediatrician are a team with your child's best health interests as your number one goal.

3) I have a newborn - what should I do to keep them safe?

Newborns are especially vulnerable to infection, so it's very important that your baby be kept away from anyone who might be sick. There are also important reasons to take your baby to your doctor in the first few weeks after birth. This may seem like conflicting messaging, so here are some concrete ways to keep your baby safe:

- a. Restrict visitors because even people who do not have symptoms could be infected and carrying the virus.
- b. Ensure that you and anybody who is around your baby practice excellent hand hygiene.

This means washing your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds before touching your baby, especially if you have touched any high-used objects like doorknobs, phones, etc. You should also thoroughly clean phones and other high-touched items at least once a day.

- c. Take your baby to the doctor for important check-ups. Newborns are at risk for weight loss and jaundice, which can both be concerning. Newborns should have their weight measured and jaundice level checked in the first 3-5 days after birth, and sometimes even more frequently than that. Newborns that did not get tested before being discharged from the hospital also require a heel stick for blood for "Newborn Screening" tests that screen for treatable diseases that can cause severe illness if not identified shortly after birth. Some newborns may also require additional testing based on the screening results taken at the hospital.

4) How will the doctor's office keep my child safe?

Peds Care is working hard to keep you and your baby safe. We have made many adjustments to ensure your child's safety. For example, most all our well-visits are scheduled in the morning, after the office has been fully disinfected overnight. No sick visits are allowed at that time. We are prescreening ALL people before they come into the office where well visits are being done. If a child or parent is potentially sick or have been exposed, we have them enter into a completely different location of our building away from all well children. For scheduled sick visits, we are asking all parents and patients to wait in their car and a staff member will walk you and your child directly from your car to the examination room, skipping the waiting room altogether. In general, exam rooms are disinfected between each use and staff use masks and gloves to keep germ transmission to a minimum. Please visit our website at www.PedsCare.com to learn more about how our practice is keeping your child safe during this difficult time!

In summary, we are here to care for your children through this difficult time. Remember that well-child visits, especially those including immunizations, are extremely important now. Peds Care is ready to help you keep your child healthy through well-visits and management of new problems or chronic illnesses. Please call us to discuss your child's health care needs and how to arrange for them to continue to be protected from illness.