

Dear Patients, Parents, and Guardians:

With the heightened awareness and growing public concern about the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) as well as the ongoing seasonal flu virus situation, we feel it is paramount to provide you with an update on the current situation and what you can do to protect yourself, and what we are doing here at the office.

WHAT IS COVID -19? There are many types of human coronavirus including some that cause mild to moderate upper respiratory illnesses (e.g. the common cold). COVID-19 (“CO” stands for corona; “VI” stands for virus; and “D” stands for disease) is a new coronavirus disease, first identified in Wuhan, China in 2019, that has not previously been identified in humans.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS? Symptoms can range from mild to severe. The most common are, **fever, cough, and shortness of breath**. Others may include sore throat, runny nose, and dizziness, while other people may have no symptoms at all.

HOW DOES IT SPREAD? COVID-19 is thought to spread mainly from person to person through respiratory droplets which are spread all around when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It is also possible for a person to catch this coronavirus by touching something that has the virus on it and then touching one’s mouth, nose, or possibly the eyes.

HOW LONG CAN A PERSON BE CONTAGIOUS? The incubation period can be up to 14 days. This is the time from when someone catches a virus until they start to feel sick. Some people may be contagious even before they show symptoms. People should be considered contagious until their symptoms are gone and they have had at least 24 hours without fever, without taking medicine.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO BEST PREVENT CATCHING OR SPREADING THE VIRUS?

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, and dispose of the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently encountered “touch points” (door knobs, handles, water faucets, handrails, etc.) using a regular household cleaning spray or wipes.
- Wash your hands vigorously, thoroughly and often with soap and water for 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom, before eating, and after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing. If soap and water are not readily available use an alcohol-based sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid close-contact with persons who are sick. Stay at least 6 feet away from anyone showing obvious symptoms.
- Avoid traveling to places where the virus is prevalent.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Stay up to date on receiving vaccinations, including the flu shot.

SHOULD I WEAR A MASK TO PROTECT MYSELF? People who are well should not be wearing a facemask, because it is not designed to protect the person wearing it. Regular facemasks should be worn by persons who are sick with COVID-19 to help prevent spread of the disease. The use of a special N95 mask is only recommended for health care workers and others who are taking care of someone who is sick with COVID-19 in a close setting.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I THINK MY CHILD OR I HAVE COVID-19 OR IF I THINK I HAVE BEEN EXPOSED TO THIS CORONAVIRUS DISEASE?

If you or your child is sick but not experiencing the most common symptoms of fever, coughing and shortness of breath, you or your child should stay at home, avoid public spaces, and self-monitor for 14 days from the time you think you or they were exposed. If your child develops fever or any other symptoms, you should call the office and advise us your concerns. One of our medical professionals will speak with you or call you back to assess your child's condition. You will then be advised whether to come in to the office or go to the emergency room.

Currently, there is no specific treatment for COVID-19, and this office does not at this time have the COVID-19 test kits (though we have orders for the kits in place and will advise you when we receive them). Typical care for a mild case should be the same as would be provided for flu-like sickness –bed rest, and drinking plenty of fluids.

Sunshine Pediatrics is available to provide you and your child with guidance and even remote care through telemedicine if you have coverage under the Carefirst, Blue Cross family of insurance. Otherwise we will continue to see patients at the office as indicated below.

WHAT PROTECTIVE STEPS ARE WE TAKING AT THE OFFICE?

Here at Sunshine Pediatrics we are doing all we can to protect our patients and staff from COVID-19. We continue to adhere to the highest standard of infection control recommended by both state and federal health guidelines. We will continue to see scheduled patients as indicated above and will take all necessary precautions.

We have initiated the following actions to ensure everyone's safety and well-being:

- All toys, books, and magazines have been removed from the reception areas and we will be frequently sanitizing our office "touch points" chairs and tables. Our building management office advises that they will also increase the frequency of cleaning the building "touch points" as well.
- We have placed an order to obtain the COVID-19 test kits when they become available.
- We will be scheduling patients so that there is minimum overlap between families in our waiting areas. We are asking that you limit the number of persons who accompany the patient to the appointment to one adult guardian.
- We strongly encourage you to notify our office and speak to a medical provider ahead of time if your child is experiencing the common COVID-19 symptoms so that a determination may be made whether to bring your child in to the office or stay at home. This will enable us to minimize unnecessary exposure, as well as to triage those who do need to seek medical care.
- We will not be accepting walk-ins
- Those who are experiencing the common symptoms and who are advised by our staff to come into the office should call the office once you arrive. Please wait in your car. The receptionist will check you in and take your cell number. We will phone you when your room is ready to reduce crowding in our waiting room. Those patients will be seen by the medical staff in a single designated exam room and a determination will be made, once they are available, whether to

administer the COVID-19 test kits or to treat other flu- like symptoms. If your child has a severe flu-like infection or is at higher risk for complications our medical staff may prescribe an anti-viral medication or direct that the patient be taken to a local emergency room.

- Patients and caregivers with a cough and/or fever will be asked to wear a mask during the entirety of the visit unless instructed to remove the mask by your provider. Please cover your face or your child's face with a scarf upon arrival to the office in case we do not have masks available.
- For the most up-to-date information on COVID-19 please visit the Centers for Disease Control or Maryland Dept. Of Health websites.

We thank you for your patience and understanding as we navigate the best way to provide excellent care during this troubling and rapidly evolving situation. As always, you can reach us at 301 593 5440, or through the patient portal.

Sincerely,

Dr. Maiya Clark, Felicia James, CPNP and the Sunshine Pediatrics staff