Ontario Medical Clinic

Coronavirus (Covid-19) Information

Please take this newsletter with you or discard in bin. Do not put back with other newsletters.

We understand that the spread of Coronavirus has brought about a difficult and uncertain time for a lot of patients.

To try to make this as stress free a time as possible we have put together some notes on how we can work together to keep everyone safe and healthy.

Staff will be asking lots of screening questions during this time. We understand that this may be frustrating but please listen to the questions asked as they may change depending on Department of Health Guidelines. It is important that you are always honest when asked the screening questions as this is a very important part of how we are going to keep everyone safe. You will still be able to access care, it may just be with a phone call with the doctor first and then if needed the doctor will instruct you on how to safely access an in clinic appointment.

There is hand sanitiser available before you enter the clinic. We are limiting patient numbers in our waiting rooms, with only 5 people per waiting room and we have increased our routine cleaning schedule. We are doing everything we can to make the clinic as safe as possible. You are also welcome to wait in your car when you arrive. Just call through and let us know you are here, we can check you in for your appointment then call you back when the doctor is ready to see you.

The clinic can now offer telephone appointments to all patients. This means that you can access your scripts, referrals and discuss any health issues that you have over the phone with your doctor. At this stage we are able to offer this service until 30th September but this may be extended.

It is important that you do not "put off" any health concerns. If you are unwell but worried about coming into the clinic we can make a time for you to speak to your doctor over the phone. Pathology, X-Ray and specialist clinics are all still open and are following the guidelines as directed by the government so it will be safe for you to have any tests or follow ups that your GP recommends. If you are unsure, call and ask about what measures they have in place for your safety. This is especially important if you have a chronic illness. It is best to keep on top of things rather than becoming very unwell and needing to attend the hospital for care.

Check your scripts and referrals to specialists are up to date. Wait times at the moment can be a bit longer so try to book your appointment at least a week in advance for repeats of scripts and routine referrals. This will help us manage appointments for people who are very unwell on the day and need to speak to a doctor urgently as well as making sure you get what you need to stay well or access further care.

We are able to send scripts directly to the pharmacy for you. You can then arrange with your pharmacy to pick up your medication when it is ready or have it delivered to you if you are isolating for any reason. We can also fax referrals to pathology, xray and send your specialist referrals directly to the specialist for you.

Symptoms to be aware of:

- Fever
- Cough
- Sore Throat
- Runny Nose
- Shortness of Breath
- Earache
- Headache
- Nausea
- Diarrhoea
- Loss of Taste or Smell
- Body Aches
- Stuffy Nose

If you have symptoms, no matter how mild, please stay home from work/school/other activities and phone the clinic to make a time to speak to your doctor. They will advise what you need to do to get tested if needed.

Please do not attend the clinic at any time while you have symptoms or are waiting on results of a Coronavirus test. This is so important. We need you to help keep us safe so that we can continue to be here to help you during this challenging time. We will also make sure that we are not in the clinic if we are unwell.

There may be times where we need to close the clinic early so please call earlier in the day to make sure you are able to speak to someone. We will still have an on call doctor available for urgent medical needs. Call the clinic and the message will direct you how to contact the on call doctor. If it is an emergency please call 000.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact the clinic and speak to one of our receptionists. We are here to help.

Telephone: 03 5023 7311

COVID-19 and face masks

Should I use a face mask?

Wearing a face mask in Australia is recommended by health experts in areas where community transmission of COVID-19 is high, whenever physical distancing is not possible.

Wearing face masks may protect you from droplets (small drops) when a person with COVID-19 coughs, speaks or sneezes, and you are less than 1.5 metres away from them. Wearing a mask will also help protect others if you are infected with the virus, but do not have symptoms of infection.

When thinking about whether wearing a face mask consider the following:

- Face masks may protect you when it is not possible to maintain the 1.5 metre physical distance from other people e.g. on a crowded bus or train or shopping centre

- Are you older or do you have other medical conditions like heart disease, diabetes or respiratory illness? People in these groups may get more severe illness if they are infected with COVID-19

- Wearing a face mask will reduce the spread of droplets from your coughs and sneezes to others (however, if you have any cold or flu-like symptoms or feel unwell, you should stay home)

- A face mask will not provide you with complete protection from COVID-19. You should also do all of the other things listed below to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

What can you do to prevent the spread of COVID-19?

Stopping the spread of COVID-19 is everyone's responsibility. The most important things that you can do to protect yourself and others are to:

- Stay at home when you are unwell, with even mild respiratory symptoms

- Regularly wash your hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand rub

- Do not touch your face

- Do not touch surfaces that may be contaminated with the virus

- Stay at least 1.5 metres away from other people (physical distancing)

- Cover your mouth when you cough by coughing into your elbow, or into a tissue. Throw the tissue away immediately.

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AUSTRALIAN COMMISSION
ON SAFETY AND QUALITY IN HEALTH CARE

When you wear a face mask some things to remember are:

HOW TO PUT ON A FACE MASK

1 Clean your hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub.

2 Hold the mask by its tapes or loops, then tie the mask around your head or put the loops around your ears.

3 Make sure the mask covers your mouth and nose, and that there are no gaps between your face and the mask, and press the nose piece around your nose.

4 Do not touch the front of the mask while wearing it.

HOW TO TAKE OFF A FACE MASK

1 Clean your hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub.

2 Take the mask off from behind your head by pulling the tapes or loops straight forward and moving the mask away from your face.

3 Throw the mask in the bin.

4 Clean your hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub.

Choosing a mask

You can use a cloth mask or a surgical mask. Surgical masks can only be used once. You can wash and reuse cloth masks. Face coverings such as scarves may not offer the same level of protection.

You can buy a mask or make your own cloth mask that covers your nose and mouth completely, or use a face shield.

When you put on or take off the mask or shield, it is important that you wash your hands first and avoid touching your face. After each use, wash the cloth or shield or dispose of it safely.

For more information about COVID-19 please visit:

https://www.health.gov.au/resources/collections/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-resources or safetyandquality.gov.au/covid-19

For more information about using face masks, please visit:

https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/face-masks-covid-19

https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/when-should-masks-be-worn-in-the-community-in-australia

https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/when-and-how-to-use-masks

safetyandquality.gov.au