

# River Hills Family Medicine COVID-19 Update

March 15, 2020

At River Hills Family Medicine, our top priority is the health and safety of our patients and staff. We will closely follow the advice from the CDC and Austin Public Health (APH) epidemiologists as new recommendations emerge.

Symptoms of COVID-19 or the new Coronavirus include fever, dry cough and fatigue. Some people may experience shortness of breath. Most people, especially children and otherwise young healthy people under 60 who contract COVID-19 will develop only mild symptoms. Nasal congestion and runny nose are found in <5% of people with the virus.

Emergency symptoms include difficulty breathing or shortness of breath, chest pain or pressure, confusion, extreme fatigue or cyanosis (bluish lips). **For patients experiencing these symptoms, you should go the emergency room.** If you do not have these warning symptoms, please avoid the ER so that they may allocate their medical resources appropriately.

If you have mild symptoms as above, please call our office and we can help. **IF YOU HAVE A FEVER, COUGH, OR SHORTNESS OR BREATH, WE WILL COME TO THE CAR TO SEE YOU! PLEASE DO NOT COME INTO OUR OFFICE.** If you meet certain criteria, you will be asked to wear a mask when you arrive to our clinic. We will swab you nose and throat and send sample to the appropriate laboratory. It takes about 2-4 days to receive results.

How you can protect yourself and your family:

- Stay home if you are sick
- Self -isolate until your symptoms resolve and up to 14 days to help prevent the spread of the disease
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick (stay greater than 6 feet apart)
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol often
- Avoid large social gatherings
- Cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze
- Limit non-essential travel

What RHFMM is doing to protect our patients and staff:

- Following appropriate guidelines for infectious disease protocols
- Monitoring health of staff by telling any ill staff member to remain at home. We will be checking the temperature of every staff member daily before clinic and once during the work day to ensure that no staff member is running a fever

- Removing any vector for spread of disease from the lobby or waiting room (such as toys and magazines)
- Added cleaning to all surfaces 4 times daily
- **For patients experiencing SEVERE symptoms OF COUGH, CHEST PAIN OR SHORTNESS OF BREATH, you should go the emergency room**
- **IF YOU HAVE A FEVER, COUGH, OR SHORTNESS OR BREATH, WE WILL COME TO THE CAR TO SEE YOU! PLEASE DO NOT COME INTO OUR OFFICE**
- Allowing many patients to do their visits via telemedicine (\*when appropriate\*) for a limited time until this crisis is behind us. If you prefer to do a telemedicine visit because you do not want to be potentially exposed, the Texas Medical Board has made a temporary allowance for this. Please notify our staff when booking your appointment so that we can call you at the time of your visit.
  - Telemedicine visits are **not appropriate** if there is a fever, head injury, chest pain, shortness of breath, annual exam, or if a patient is requesting most controlled substances and must be at the discretion of the provider.
  - Telemedicine visits would be appropriate for follow up visits of chronic medical conditions such as depression, diabetes, hypertension, hyperlipidemia, insomnia and ADD. We would also do telemedicine visits for mild symptoms of allergies, UTI, ear pain and sore throats.
  - Hormone consultations can be done as telemedicine visits.