

COVID-19 Current Topics: 3-20-20

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Research is reporting that most persons under the age of 60, who have no chronic medical conditions, will have very mild symptoms if they contract COVID-19. Symptoms include **fever, fatigue, and a dry cough**. A much smaller number of people may develop shortness of breath. An even smaller number of individuals will have nasal congestion. **Of those with COVID-19, almost no patients are reported to have runny nose.**

When should I seek care at an ER?

- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Pain or pressure in the chest that is persistent
- Confusion or inability to arouse your child or teen
- Bluish color to mouth area or face
- Other symptoms that to you as a parent seem severe or concerning

If you are unsure if an ER visit is indicated, you can call our office for advice.

Can we test for COVID-19?

We currently have VERY LIMITED testing, and we are following the CDC and local health department guides to determine who qualifies for testing. These criteria are continuously changing based on availability. We will keep you informed about what our office is available to do. We are hoping this changes in the upcoming weeks, but for now the CDC and health department have limited testing kits. These are only being used for individuals who meet a strict criteria.

Do we need to come in for fever, ST, cough, and other symptoms?

If we are experiencing signs of illness that would not otherwise be concerning outside of the COVID-19 pandemic, we advise managing symptoms at home.

If you have any signs of illness, we recommend you self-quarantine and avoid contact with others. Concerning symptoms would include:

- fever (>100.4F) in a baby under 60 days
- respiratory distress
- barking cough
- increased work of breathing
- cough that interferes with sleep or play
- dehydration (unable to urinate at least every 6-8 hours, no tears with crying, dry lips or mouth)
- sore throat in the absence of cold symptoms
- ear pain for more than 2 days, or in conjunction with fever in kids younger than 2 years old

Please call our office if your child is experiencing any of the symptoms listed above.

Is there a need to stockpile prescription medications at home?

Thankfully, we are open and will continue to remain open. We are able to provide visits for illness and send medication to the pharmacy as indicated. We are not filling prescriptions for more than the expected duration a medication is needed or for an amount that is not indicated.

Should we use ibuprofen with COVID-19?

There is not enough evidence to give definitive advice on this. If there is suspicion of COVID-19 and you've already offered ibuprofen, you do not need to panic. If fever persists, it is reasonable to offer acetaminophen instead, unless your child has a known allergy or contraindication.

Should we stay home? When can we see loved ones?

Currently, recommendations are for everyone to stay home with immediate family. We do not recommend visiting extended family or friends at this time due to the fact that it is possible for children with COVID-19 to have no symptoms. This should help protect the elderly and immunocompromised population. It is ok to play outside, but we recommend staying at least 6 feet away from non-family members.

If my child has asthma or any other health conditions does it increase their risk or should I be doing anything different?

Having asthma does not change any of our current recommendations. If your child has asthma, continue using your preventive and rescue asthma medication as prescribed. As far as any extra precautions, we should all be staying home to minimize the risk of exposure.

Will we offer telemedicine appointments?

Yes, we will be offering this very soon. Look for an announcement in our newsletter.

What if I have an appointment in the office; what safety measures are in place at PAA?

We have numerous safety measures in place and will continue to change these plans as recommendations change. The current plan in place is as follows:

- Conducting COVID-19 screening over the phone and outside the office door, before a patient ever enters the office
- Asking patients to wait in their cars until their room is available, eliminating anyone waiting in the waiting room or congregating in hallways.
- Separating our office so that sick and well patients are never in the same spaces
- Dividing our staff into 2 teams, one who only cares for patients who are well, and one who only cares for patients who are ill.
- Recommending only well-child visits for those from birth through 4 years, when immunizations are given
- Limiting the number of adults and children allowed in office accompanying the patient
- Constant cleaning with disinfectants that have EPA-approval for emerging viral pathogens
- Staff are required to check their temperature daily upon entering the office and upon leaving for the day

When can I do to protect my family?

- Avoid contact with those who are ill. If you are ill, we recommend staying home until 14 days after resolution of symptoms.
- Try not to touch your mouth, nose, eyes. Also, wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Be sure to cover your cough or sneeze and if a tissue is used, throw it away directly into a trash can
- Practice social distancing by avoiding large crowds and by keeping 6 feet of separation between anyone who is coughing or sneezing
- Avoid hugs, kisses, and handshakes
- Avoid travel that is not essential

What can we do to help with anxiety surrounding COVID-19?

- Take breaks from social media and screens. Though there is great information out there, having media-free time can help us not get overwhelmed.
- Focus on the positive. There are so many things we are all doing SO WELL. Our community is doing a great job with social distancing and practicing good

techniques to prevent spread of illness. Let's look for the good out there and praise each other when we see it.

- Rest well! Studies show that when we are well rested our bodies do a better job fighting illness. Remember, watching screens the hour before bed can deter our ability to fall asleep. Try to stay off all screens the hour before bed. Maybe take a long shower or bath.
- Do things you love! Perhaps it's time to take up a new hobby. Pull those old games out of the closet. Learn a new card game. Start a puzzle.
- Get outside and enjoy the spring weather and beautiful wildflowers. Wave at your neighbors as you go for a walk.
- Keep or start exercising. Now is the perfect time to start a new exercise routine.
- Learn new recipes and teach your kids how to cook.
- Use technology in positive ways such as spending time on FaceTime with friends and family. If we can see our loved ones, it helps us remember we are all in this together and are not alone.

Please share your ideas with us on Facebook so that we can all de-stress together.

Where can I find credible information online

- Our website, on the COVID-19 Tab
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>
- <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/chest-lungs/Pages/2019-Novel-Coronavirus.aspx>
- <http://austintexas.gov/department/health>