Give yourself a hug, a high-five, a pat on the back! These are uneasy times and we are all in this together, moving forward and doing our best to keep you and ourselves healthy. And you are all doing a great job – each of our patients has been very understanding and flexible with the changes we are making, and we really appreciate your support.

We are 11 days into the government’s 15-day shutdown and 3 days into Governor Lamont’s request that all Nutmegers “Stay Safe, Stay Home.” While cases of coronavirus continue to rise, we continue to see only a small percentage of people needing hospitalization. We can sense a real change in people’s behavior and habits, and we remain hopeful that these efforts will have a strong impact in reducing viral spread.

We know the coronavirus is making a lot of our patients particularly anxious. We remain healthy and miss seeing you. We cannot wait until we are able to fully open up our offices to start seeing all patients regularly again!

We want to remind you of a few things:
OFFICE HOURS: 9am – 4pm. We currently are seeing patients for urgent gynecologic problems in our New Haven or Guilford offices. Please call us with non-urgent issues during our usual office hours. After hours, you can reach us through the answering service for all emergent concerns. Please try to limit after-hours calls to true emergencies to keep our providers available to care for our laboring patients and emergencies.

NO VISITORS: Without exception, all patients are asked to come to all office appointments unaccompanied, including partners and children. This includes appointments in our office as well as for all outpatient ultrasounds.

TELEHEALTH: We continue to have great success with Telehealth visits. If you have questions or concerns about your gynecologic health, please let us know. All of our providers (even Dr. Hanson!) are set up to conduct Telehealth visits. So do not feel like you need to wait for the pandemic to subside to have your questions answered!

We have some suggestions to help KEEP YOURSELF CALM AND SANE!

Create some rituals that you look forward to. Make a cup of tea or coffee, read a good magazine or book, light a candle, take a warm bath.

Keep a schedule. For those of you working from home and/or homeschooling kids, maintaining structure in your day is important and orienting.

Play music

Have a movie night

Exercise. Whether you have always loved exercise or not, now is a great time to get your body moving. Exercise has been shown to reduce anxiety. Many of our patients are noticing that they are moving less while working from home. So make changes to your day to ensure you are keeping your body healthy and your mind at ease by going for a long walk or finding a virtual exercise class that you enjoy.

Get outside. Mother nature did us a favor this year by gifting us an early spring. Get outside and go for a walk, plant a (frost-resistant) garden, sit and gaze at the Sound, take your conference call from the kids’ playset. You get the idea…
Have a virtual dinner party. Humans are social creatures. Like you, we miss hanging out with our extended families and friends. But we can still connect. Platforms like Facebook can feed our anxiety, so consider instead booking a virtual dinner party. Have your book club on conference call. Group chat your friends. Draw circles six feet apart in the yard, fill each circle with a few chairs, and have a socially-distant get together with friends.

And as always, don’t forget the following:

- Practice social distancing
- Wash your hands with soap and water regularly and effectively, for at least 20 seconds
- Cover coughs and sneezes
- Find time for exercise and get outside! Practice mindful meditation.
- Avoid unnecessary social interaction – work from home if possible. Do not visit restaurants, movie theaters, coffee shops, public spaces. Limit your trips to the grocery store. No play dates, parties, visiting friends/family. Instead have virtual parties.
- Avoid unnecessary travel, even locally
- Do not share food. Cook your own meals if possible.

We are here for you! Take care of yourself and your family, and please let us know how we can help you. We are all in this together.

Warm Regards,

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Steven Fleischman, MD, FACOG
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