Coronavirus update 3/15/2020

We are taking every step we can to protect you – and our entire community – during the COVID-19 outbreak. This email is to update you on changes to our practice in response to the presence of COVID-19 in our communities and to remind you again how you can protect yourself. The situation continues to evolve day to day and at times hour to hour, and we are committed to keeping you up to date with the information that we have available.

In order to adhere to current recommendations regarding social distancing, starting this week we will be modifying our office schedule to accommodate only pregnant women and urgent gynecologic appointments. We are trying to minimize exposure in our waiting rooms by decreasing the number of patients in the office. In addition, the hospital has requested that we reschedule all non-emergent operative procedures at this time. If you have an upcoming scheduled surgery, we will be in touch to discuss the particulars of your situation.

- You will hear from our office in the coming days to reschedule all non-urgent and routine health maintenance or follow-up appointments.
- If you have an urgent or time-sensitive issue, one of our physicians or nurses will speak with you to determine whether your care can be handled over the phone. If you need to be seen in the office, we will see you.

The most common symptoms of COVID-19 include fever (> 100.4F) or one or more of the following symptoms: cough, difficulty breathing / shortness of breath, and/or gastrointestinal symptoms.

- If you currently have symptoms of the coronavirus and are not pregnant, please call your primary care physician to determine if you need emergent evaluation.
- Do not come to the office if you believe you have COVID-19.
- If you may have been exposed to a person with proven or suspected COVID-19 and have an urgent gynecologic issue, please do not come to the office without calling first.
- All patients are asked to come to your appointment unaccompanied, including partners and children.

This is a virus spread through respiratory droplets. There are simple things you can do to significantly reduce your risk of infection:

- Wash your hands with soap and water regularly and effectively, for at least 20 seconds
• Cover cough and sneezes
• Avoid unnecessary social interaction – work from home if possible. Do not visit restaurants, movies theaters, coffee shops, public spaces. No play dates, parties, visiting friends/family.
• Avoid unnecessary travel, even locally
• Do not share food. Cook your own meals if possible.
• Do not travel on public transportation if it can be avoided
• Stay home if you are sick or were exposed to someone with COVID-19
• Disinfect your work space and other public areas where you spend time

We strongly recommend that our patients practice social distancing while the virus continues to exhibit community spread. What we do – or don’t do – over the next week will have a massive impact on the local and perhaps national trajectory of coronavirus. Social distancing feels extreme, but we need to create distance between family units and between individuals in order to slow the transmission of this virus. The symptoms of coronavirus take 4-5 days to manifest themselves. Someone who comes over looking well can transmit the virus.

All of that said, this is a time to take care of yourself and your family, even while maintaining social distance.

• Exercise, take walks/hikes, go for a run outside and stay connected through phone, video and social media. When you go outside try to maintain at least six feet between you and non-family members. Getting outside is important during this unusual time. Fortunately, the weather is improving – try to go outside every day if you are able.
• Try to avoid excessive exposure to media coverage. Turn off the news and disconnect for as long as you can. Unfollow people and mute groups whose posts you find particularly unsettling.
• Create a daily self-care routine.
• Focus on relaxation techniques: meditation, yoga, stretching
• Engage with your family and friend through group video chat. Stay connected to your loved ones this way.
• Slow down. Anxiety has been rampant in our society for far longer than COVID-19 has been present. Forced downtime can be a gift – reset and reconnect with your passions. Show yourself grace.
• Remember: this too shall pass.

Thank you in advance for your understanding. Things are changing rapidly, and we will continue to do our best to communicate updates as necessary. Stay safe and healthy through the upcoming weeks!
Warm Regards,

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