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.

We know that you are concerned about COVID-19 and the impact on your pregnancy and want to reiterate that **at this time we are not aware of any specific concerns regarding infection with COVID-19 in pregnancy**. In fact, early data suggests that pregnant women are not affected more severely than non-pregnant women.

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.

**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 OR if you have been exposed to a person with proven or suspected coronavirus, please call us as soon as possible. We will help determine if you need emergent evaluation or if you can be safely monitored at home. **DO NOT COME TO THE OFFICE OR THE HOSPITAL IF YOU HAVE SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19 WITHOUT CALLING FIRST.**
- To reiterate:
  - Do not come to the office if you believe you have COVID-19. Please call us first to allow us to triage the situation and determine the best place to see you.
  - If you have been exposed to a person with proven or suspected COVID-19, please do not come to the office without calling first.
• If you are not feeling well and feel that your appointment can be safely rescheduled, please call to reschedule. If you have any questions, we have nurses and physicians available to talk with you.

• 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.

Do not be afraid to reach out. As isolating as this time feels, none of us are in this alone. We are here to help answer your questions and calm your anxieties.

Warm Regards,

Thomas Hanson, MD FACOG
Musa Speranza, MD, FACOG
Steven Fleischman, MD, FACOG
Michael Reel, MD, FACOG
Margaret Baumbusch, MD, FACOG
Meagan Haynes, MD, FACOG
Erin Moroni, FNP-BC