



UPDATED! March 15, 2020

Dear New Hope Children's Clinic families,

The World Health Organization (WHO) has named COVID-19 (Coronavirus) a global pandemic. Schools and businesses around the country are closing, hospitals are at capacity, and events are being cancelled. While this deserves our utmost respect and we must follow the direction of our governmental leaders, it is important to remember that **the majority of people who get sick with COVID-19 have mild to moderate illness and recover without hospitalization.**

Children have fared well. We don't know exactly why that is, but we are grateful! Children can still transmit the virus to other individuals who may be more susceptible to severe disease. Standard practices like covering coughs with elbows or tissues, frequent hand washing, cleaning high-touch surfaces in your home and cleaning your electronic devices often are very important.

We now know that COVID-19 is in our community due to a positive test. This is not a surprise to anyone in healthcare.

Please understand that we do not have a rapid diagnostic test that can be performed in our office for COVID-19. We are expecting updates from Huntsville Hospital early this week for local testing sites. Tests will always require a doctor's order so call us with questions. 256-723-4673 Do not present to the office without FIRST calling to tell us about any possible exposure.

Symptoms of COVID-19 can be very similar to influenza and other viral illness that are circulating this time of year. It causes fatigue, fever, body aches and cough, but not much nasal congestion or drainage. Sometimes people develop shortness of breath. As with other viral illness, STAY HOME if you are mildly sick. Symptomatic care is the only treatment: Acetaminophen and Ibuprofen, extra fluids and rest. For infants nasal saline and suctioning is helpful. See the CDC COVID-19 guidelines for households.

This is an EXCELLENT resource for families

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/home/index.html>

- **Effective immediately, we will no longer have a waiting room in our building. We are moving to a system of having patients wait in their cars. When you arrive, please call to let us know you are here. We will give further instructions at that time. This will minimize exposure to germs in the waiting room and allow for social distancing as recommended by global health leaders.**
- If your child is showing mild symptoms of cough, fever, cold symptoms, we encourage you to manage at home, but always feel free to call us for any concerns or questions.
- Your child needs to be seen either in our office or the ER, if he/she has difficulty with breathing, fever that is not responsive to fever reducers, sore throat without cold symptoms, or otherwise worries you. As always, any infant under 2 months with a temperature over 100.4 needs to be seen. Call us.
- Be sure you have Ibuprofen and Tylenol on hand, enough for your family. Please don't hoard these resources in amounts you won't need.
- We will offer rescheduling of well-visits, routine follow-up appointments and medication refill appointments during this time to limit possible exposure of healthy children. We can also do some of these visits via telemedicine and are actively working on how to best schedule these. Please ask us about this when you call.
- If your child has daily medicines, be sure you have a 90-day supply. Call early for refills if needed.
- With enough notice, we will mail prescriptions that can't be submitted electronically.

Thank you for your patience and understanding during this challenging time. As always, the care of our patients is of utmost concern to us. Importantly, we must also protect our staff so that we can be healthy and available to serve our patients. We remain committed to being accessible to all of our patients, please call with any concerns or questions. We are in this together!

Trustworthy sources include:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/summary.html>

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

Sincerely,
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NHCC Medical Director
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