

## **COVID-19 General Policies and Protocols**

### **Enhanced cleaning measures**

The practice has implemented enhanced cleaning protocols. Each patient is asked to wash his or her hands upon arrival to the office. Following the visit, high touch areas are thoroughly cleaned before the next patient is seen. HEPA filtration devices are used throughout the office. All self-service hospitality stations (coffee, magazines, etc.) have been removed.

### **Patient Flow**

While the office doors are always open to see patients with surgical concerns, unnecessary exposures are limited. Telemedicine visits are encouraged, and forms are completed on-line. Inside the office, social distancing is encouraged. Before a patient is allowed to enter the office, pre-screening is performed. Presently, in-office visits are limited to patients. Other visitors are asked to wait inside their car.

### **Masks and PPE**

All staff members will wear masks and appropriate PPE when communicating with patients in the office setting. Likewise, patients are also asked to wear masks. Masks will be provided to patients who come to the office without an appropriate mask.

### **Surgery Scheduling**

Surgery availability is based on local COVID rates and hospital policies. These often fluctuate, and patients need to be aware that their surgery may need to be postponed for safety reasons.

### **COVID Testing**

All surgical patients are required to have a negative COVID PCR test prior to proceeding with the procedure. The test will be performed at the hospital facility a few days prior to the procedure if the surgery required general anesthesia. Patients who have in-office procedures using local anesthesia need to have a COVID test within 72 hours of their procedure. All patients are asked to self-isolate following their COVID test and continue their social isolation one week after surgery. If the COVID test is positive or if the patient has an exposure prior to surgery, then surgery will be postponed. COVID and surgery, together appear to greatly increase the risks of having a poor outcome.

### **Vaccine**

All staff members have been vaccinated against COVID-19. This significantly reduces the likelihood of staff members getting COVID from patients. However, it is not known at this time if vaccinated individuals can be asymptomatic and transfer the disease. Therefore, all precautions will continue until the CDC determines that it is safe to do otherwise. Vaccinated patients will still need preoperative COVID testing and are expected to follow the guidelines as outlined above.