

Gore Bay Medical Centre

Information for Patients about COVID-19

Dear Patients,

As many of you are already aware, the situation in Ontario regarding the COVID-19 (the illness caused by novel coronavirus) has been rapidly changing. The risk of infectious spread of this disease is still present, so we are taking measures to protect you.

Coronavirus spreads through sneezes, coughs and direct contact that transmit the virus from an infected person. You need to lower your chances of coming into contact with persons who are, or who may be infected.

While still meeting your health care needs, in order to slow the spread of the virus, we are taking steps to decrease the number of people in our waiting room and clinic.

Appointments in your own home by telemedicine, the virtual house call

We are changing some of our regular office appointments to telemedicine consultations (video or telephone consultations) using Ontario Telehealth Network (OTN) connections to reach you in your own home. This way, you will be able to access the care you need without the risk of potentially being exposed to a sick patient in our waiting room. This should also make things easier for our patients who are finding transportation difficult, and for patients with children at home.

When you call for an appointment, you may be offered a video appointment or telephone consultation with your doctor. The video appointments will require that you have a computer, tablet or cell phone and access to the internet. Video links through OTN are secure and confidential.

For more information regarding video appointments, please follow this link:

<https://otn.ca/patients/evisit/>

If you do not have a computer or internet connection, we may offer you a telephone consultation if appropriate.

Appointments at the clinic

Some conditions will still require an actual visit to the clinic for an examination or procedure. In-clinic visits will be **BY APPOINTMENT ONLY**.

WE ARE NOT ACCEPTING DROP-IN OR WALK-IN APPOINTMENTS AT THIS TIME.

PLEASE CALL (705-282-2262) if you think you need to be seen. We are receiving a high volume of calls so please try again if the line is busy.

Please **bring your own mask** to your appointment. Put it on before you walk into the premises and only remove it after you leave. Remember to thoroughly wash or sanitize your hands upon arrival at the clinic and after taking off your mask.

Please **read and follow all signage** at the clinic. Things can change quickly as our policies and procedures adapt to current guidelines.

For guidance on wearing non-medical masks, please visit the Public Health Sudbury & Districts website: <https://www.phsd.ca/health-topics-programs/diseases-infections/coronavirus/guidance-for-wearing-non-medical-masks>

What to expect when you arrive

Physical distancing measures are in place. Please look to posted signs and staff for guidance.

Patient screening will take place at the office door while you sanitize your hands (sanitizer is provided).

Only the person with the appointment should enter the building. While exceptions are made in special circumstances, family and friends are asked to wait in their vehicle.

Non-urgent services

Non-urgent appointments such as driver's physicals, other routine check-ups, and pap smears may be delayed or re-booked. These are still important and will be re-booked when the situation improves. You will receive a call from us to cancel or reschedule.

Work notes and other forms

Doctors notes for sickness absences will not be offered unless this would cause hardship. Governments and the Canadian Medical Association are urging employers and other third parties to request fewer forms and notes during this crisis to avoid needlessly endangering the public.

Travel Grants

Travel Grant forms can be searched for and downloaded from this link:

<http://www.forms.ssb.gov.on.ca/mbs/ssb/forms/ssbforms.nsf>

You can print one off, fill in your part and have the specialist's office complete theirs. If you drop it at (or mail it to) our office, we will complete our section; **please include a stamp** and we will mail it for you.

Employment Insurance

There is no waiting period at present. A dedicated hotline is available at 1-833-381-2725.

Special note for returning travelers

In some cases, a COVID-19 infected person may be contagious even before they have any symptoms.

If you are returning home from international travel to ANY country in the last 14 days, including the United States, or if you have had contact with a patient confirmed to have coronavirus, please stay home and isolate yourself. Do not go to work or gatherings or public areas, and do not use public transportation. Even if you have no symptoms of cough, fever, or shortness of breath, you should self-isolate at home for 14 days.

COVID-19 Assessment

If you develop any new or worsening symptoms, you may need to be tested for the coronavirus at an approved COVID-19 Assessment centre. Assessment centres on the island are located adjacent to the emergency departments in Little Current (call 705-368-2300) and Mindemoya (call 705-377-5311). ***YOU MUST CALL AHEAD FOR AN APPOINTMENT.***

If you have severe shortness of breath or are extremely ill, call 911.

You may also contact Public Health Sudbury & Districts for more information about coronavirus and COVID-19 at 705-370-9200.

Public Health has been receiving many calls with questions about coronavirus. The link below contains up to date information about coronavirus, and how to keep yourself and your family well and safe: <https://www.phsd.ca/health-topics-programs/diseases-infections/coronavirus>

If you have more questions about COVID-19 and the coronavirus, or whether you need to be tested, you may also call Telehealth at 1-866-797-0000.

Together, we can help to keep our community safe and healthy. Please follow the directions of your doctors and Public Health.

STAY SAFE!

Drs. Hamilton, McRae and Wilson