

Dear Patient,

If you are ill, please call my practice. I remain available for you.

We are concerned about Coronavirus infection, known as COVID-19, and should all follow the CDC guidelines for prevention strategies. The Florida Department of Health is even more stringent in its testing strategy based on the availability of actual test kits and employees to perform the test.

1. There are no commercial tests for COVID-19 currently available for office testing such as a Quick Strep throat swab or influenza nasal swab. An oral specimen by synthetic swab plus a nasal specimen will need to be obtained, placed in a special tube and sent to the Department of Public Health. Based on the clinical history, they will decide to run it or not. Commercial labs such as Quest and LabCorp will begin offering similar testing with approval of Public Health prior to running the test.
2. Stay Home! If you are 60 or older stay home. Do not go to airports or on plane trips. Do not go to train stations or on trains. Do not go on cruises. While it is difficult to stay out of restaurants, bars, gyms, theaters, movies, concerts and public gatherings of 10 or more; you need to do that for your loved ones, friends and neighbors as well as yourself. We do not want to spread the disease and overwhelm the community health care facilities from providing life-saving measures. Do not eat in your country club dining room. Do not play cards in your card room. Socialize with people you know who are truthful enough to tell you if they are ill or have been in contact with people who are ill or have travelled within the last two weeks.
3. Treat this like a hurricane. Have several weeks of prescription medicines on hand just in case the production supply chain leads to shortages. Have several weeks of nonperishable food and water on-hand.
4. Wash your hands constantly and thoroughly. The recommendation is for a minimum of 20 seconds.
5. "Social Distancing" is the new politically correct term for keeping 10 feet between you and others. Avoid hand shaking. Avoid hugging and kissing.

If you have a checkup appointment at our office, my staff will be asking you about recent travel, group meetings attended and exposure to sick individuals when they call to confirm that appointment. This information will be conveyed to the doctor.

Several patients and caregivers have been very defensive about this. We need to protect healthy patients from potentially contagious patients. We are all in this together so it's important for all of us to remain civil during these uncertain times.

Once again, if you are ill, please call us. We will be following the CDC recommended guidelines for individuals with upper respiratory infection symptoms and gastrointestinal symptoms. We are in touch with the CDC, Florida Department of Public Health, Palm Beach County Department of Health and infection control at Boca Regional Hospital and West Boca Medical Center throughout the day.

The government announced on March 17th they have relaxed the regulations regarding telehealth visits. I will begin to conduct them via Skype or FaceTime as I deem appropriate. Telehealth visits will need to be scheduled just as you would an office visit. Home visits are suspended.

If you have questions, please call the office, leave a message and I will return your call. I believe the next few months will be different and emotionally taxing compared to anything most of us who have never been to war have experienced.

We will survive this and find a way to resume our active and mobile lives if we are smart, considerate and fortunate.