



Dear families of GBMC Pediatric Group,

We hope your family is well during this challenging time. We also hope that there has not been an increase in injuries as your children are homebound, but instead that there has been a burst of more creativity as they have more unscheduled play time! We reassure you that we remain your medical home and sanity/mental health support through this new world. Our goal is to keep your family healthy and safe to the best of our ability. We continue to closely monitor the coronavirus situation with up-to-date guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Maryland Department of Health (MD DOH).

Please keep in mind that children are at very low risk of becoming seriously ill or dying from coronavirus (COVID-19 is the illness and SARS-CoV-2 is the scientific name of the coronavirus itself). Of the over 3,000 deaths in the US through the end of March, there was only one death of a child and of the 80,000 cases in China, only one pediatric patient under 19 years of age died. Children can be asymptomatic carriers of the virus. Hence, they can pose a significant threat to spread the virus to others, especially those over 60 years of age. To minimize the potential spread of the virus, please remember to encourage frequent hand washing with soap and water for 20 seconds and to wipe frequently used surfaces with household cleaner or bleach. Also, we encourage limiting visitors to your home and, of course, no play dates.

Thank you for your patience and cooperation as we navigated through the first few weeks of procedural changes to ensure the utmost safety for all- patients and staff. We are delighted to report a smooth transition to this new pediatric care landscape.

First, we decreased patient traffic in the office so no one waits in the waiting area; patients are directed to an exam room immediately upon office arrival. Staff now perform all check in procedures prior to the scheduled appointment. **In office well child visits are currently limited from birth through 15 months of age, 4 years and 11 years of age** due to critical immunizations. CareFirst and Cigna provide coverage for virtual video well child visits; we hope other insurers will follow suit. If you have one of these insurances, we encourage you to call and schedule a video well child visit. In person sick visits have been mostly converted to virtual video visits. Families report relief that we continue treating their sick children and keeping children up to date with preventive care without having to come to the office. We strongly encourage you to sign up for **MyChart** to enable virtual video visits and to email non-urgent questions to your primary care provider.

If a sick visit for respiratory symptoms or fever is necessary, you and your child will be given a mask to wear upon arrival and asked to use hand sanitizer. Per GBMC policy, we are limiting all in office visits to patient and **one parent or guardian**. The only exceptions are the

first office visit following nursery discharge and the two-week well child visit, as mothers may not be able to drive yet.

We have discontinued late evening hours and Saturday morning sick visit hours for the time being. Our office is currently open from 8am to 5:30pm, Monday through Friday. If your child needs evaluation during Saturday morning sick visit hours (8am-11am), please call the regular office number and you will be directed to a number where a provider will arrange a virtual video visit for evaluation.

At this time, we are not performing COVID-19 tests in our office. We also are limiting unnecessary testing for influenza and strep, as both procedures risk spread of respiratory droplets to those in close contact.

In order to limit the spread and exposure to the Coronavirus, we urge you to avoid going to the emergency department unless you or your child is experiencing a life-threatening emergency. If you are unsure, please contact us. We are dedicated to supporting your family in this brave new world. As always, it is an honor to care for your family.

Sincerely,

GBMC Health Partners Pediatric Group —

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