



Important Update about COVID-19 (May 1, 2020)

Dear Patients,

We thought it was time to update you on how your New Vision Family Health Team is dealing with COVID-19. We would like to assure you that we are doing everything possible to safely manage this challenging situation and to thank you for your cooperation and patience. Please be assured that all changes are in an effort to ensure the safety of our patients, our staff, and our physicians.

FOR EVERYONE:

Please heed the advice of our Public Health experts and stay home whenever possible to slow the spread of this virus. This will allow our health care system to take care of all patients as needed.

If you have any symptoms of COVID-19 (fever, cough, shortness of breath, runny nose, or sore throat) it is very important that you stay home to avoid the spread of infection. Please note that we **CANNOT** test for COVID-19 in our office; we can assess you virtually to help to determine if you need to be swabbed and, if necessary, can refer you for further assessment. Even if you think you have "a cold" - please stay home and self-isolate.

There is no treatment for COVID-19. Unless you are seriously ill or have other serious medical problems, seeing a doctor will not change the advice. The advice will continue to be:

- Stay home, rest, drink plenty of fluids
- Over the counter cough and cold medications can help with symptom relief
- Cough and sneeze into your sleeve
- Wash your hands with soap and water (at least 20 seconds) frequently

If you think you have COVID-19, please use the [self-assessment tool](#).

Information is changing quickly; please visit the [Region of Waterloo Public Health website](#) for the most up to date local information.

APPOINTMENTS:

If you need help, please let us know. Our office is still open and we are conducting most of our appointments by phone or videoconferencing. At this time, we continue to see some patients in the office as needed. This includes well-baby visits with immunizations, prenatal appointments and any other visit that requires a physical examination. Many other visits are being done by telephone or virtually. You are welcome to continue to contact the office to arrange an appropriate appointment.

If you do need to come to the office, please come at your given appointment time. We do not want people arriving early and being in the office longer than needed. We encourage you to wear your own cloth mask. Please attend the appointment alone. For a child's appointment, only one adult should attend with the child. If you become sick before a scheduled appointment, please call us before

coming to the office as the timing of your appointment may change.

PRESCRIPTIONS:

If you require prescription renewals, please contact your pharmacy to fax us a request. Please allow at least 72 hours for us to respond. Please do not walk into the office to ask for a prescription renewal.

AFTER-HOURS CARE:

After-hours care can be accessed by calling our office number and following the voice mail directions. If you feel you have an **URGENT** concern, you will be directed to call the Telephone Health Advisory Service at 1-866-553-7205 to be assessed by a nurse who will direct further care. For non-urgent issues, call our office the next business day. On weekends, doctors are scheduling virtual clinics as necessary. Please call our office and follow the voice mail prompts if you feel you need to be seen for an urgent concern on the weekend.

ADVANCE CARE PLANNING:

On a final note, we'd like you to consider the importance of having a discussion that we should all have: advance care planning for end of life care. We bring this up now, as any one of us could become very sick with COVID-19 and not have the mental capacity to make our own health care decisions. We need to let our families know what level of medical care we'd like to receive if we are critically ill.

You should consider your own wishes, values and beliefs, and communicate these to someone you would trust to act on your behalf. There are no right or wrong answers to this. The right choice is the one that you think is right, and not what anyone else thinks.

This is **NOT** being mentioned as a process to deny medical care to anyone regardless of age or condition. We are not implying you will become severely ill. However, we feel it's crucial to align the appropriate level of medical care with your wishes should the need arise.

Below are some useful tools to help guide your conversation with loved ones about the medical care choices you would want in the event you are unable to speak for yourself.

- [Advance Care Planning Waterloo-Wellington](#)
- [Speak Up Advance Care Planning Workbook](#)

Please continue to visit our website at www.newvisionhealth.ca for further information and resources. If you have any questions at all, please call. We are all in this together.

Sincerely,

New Vision Family Health Team
