

Patient updates

April 1, 2022

Dear patients,

Given the relaxation of certain public health measures, we want to ensure our patients are feeling safe about visiting our clinics, and confident about what to do when you feel ill.

We are writing to share updates about:

- How we are keeping our clinics safe
- What to do if you have COVID-19 symptoms

How we are keeping our clinics safe

Our clinics continue to have IPAC measures in place. Infection prevention and control or IPAC (pronounced: EYE-pack) is a series of measures that help prevent the spread of germs and infections. It includes things like:

- **Entrance screening:** Everyone coming in to our sites is asked questions about any COVID-19 related symptoms they may have and redirected as necessary – staff are not coming into the building if they are feeling unwell.
- **Universal masking:** All staff, physicians, patients and visitors are required to [wear masks](#) to help keep everyone safe. You will be given a mask at the entrance.
- **Physical distancing:** Everyone is encouraged to keep a 2 metre/6 foot distance from people around them. There are visual stickers, banners and markers in our spaces to help with this.
- **Infection prevention measures:** Our teams are wearing the appropriate personal protective equipment (which could include masks, gloves, face shields and protective gowns) and following all recommended infection control practices to reduce the possibility of transmission of COVID-19, including cleaning and washing hands frequently.

- **Enhanced cleaning:** All of our areas and surfaces are cleaned regularly with approved disinfectants to keep spaces clean. Extra cleaning is being done in all patient care areas.

We continue to ask patients to call first before coming into clinic. When you call to book an appointment, you can now request either an in person or a virtual (phone) appointment. To review more about virtual appointments, including what can be assessed virtually, read our [patient communication](#) from Dec. 23, 2021.

Our evening and weekend urgent care clinics remain open. We ask you call first rather than walk in. For more information about [clinic hours and locations](#), including [urgent care](#), you can view our website with more information.

What to do if you have COVID-19 symptoms

Right now, certain high-risk people with COVID may be able to access different prescription medicines that have been proven to reduce the risk of being admitted to hospital because of COVID. **All these medications should be given within 5 to 7 days of symptoms starting.**

If you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, or you have confirmed that you are COVID positive through a test, **please call the clinic right away** if any of the following apply to you:

- You have an immune system that is weakened by a health condition or medications
- You are 70 years old or older
- You have not had any doses of a COVID-19 vaccine
- You have any of the following conditions: diabetes, obesity, high blood pressure, lung disease, serious kidney problems, intellectual disability, cerebral palsy or sickle cell disease or some other chronic illness.

Anyone who is concerned about the severity or duration of their COVID symptoms should also call our clinic for assistance.

For more information about COVID-19 medications, view [this resource](#).

Take care and be well,
SMHAFHT Leadership Team