

## Patient updates

**May 13, 2022**

Dear patients,

We are writing to share a brief message about our phone lines, as at times you may experience longer wait times when you call in. In this communication, we will share information about:

- FHT email booking on pause
- Anticipated phone wait times you may experience
- Updated COVID-19 related information
- Upcoming patient webinar
- Long weekend clinic update

### Anticipated wait time you may experience

**Please note, our email booking system is currently on pause due to staffing constraints.** If you email a request to book an appointment, you will receive an auto-reply prompting you to call for an appointment.

You may at times experience longer wait times when you call in. On average, the wait time is 5-10 minutes but can be longer with higher volumes of calls. We are continuing to experience staffing shortages, a trend impacting all health care organizations. We appreciate your understanding and patience when you call us. Our team is working very hard to get through all of the calls and support our patients.

Please consider calling mid-morning or mid-afternoon when the phone lines tend to be less busy. Monday mornings are a particularly busy time. Please be prepared to experience increased wait times when you call in.

If you are calling about an emergency, please call 911 or proceed to your nearest emergency room.

Non-urgent medical visits may take longer to book and these visits may be

booked 1-2 weeks or longer from your initial call. These include monitoring chronic health conditions, cancer screening and preventative health care visits, follow up for lab and test results, and ongoing health concerns.

**Our same day medical access is intended to address urgent medical concerns that need to be assessed in the next 24-48 hours.** When calling to book your appointment, please ask to book with your Physician or Nurse Practitioner (NP) first. If your Physician or NP do not have appointment availability and your medical concern is urgent and requires attention, our teams will look for alternative options to address your concern.

If you require medical forms or notes, please do not wait until the day or week before to connect with us. We will not be able to accommodate these requests in an urgent manner and could take up to 30 days to complete for some medical forms.

We are here for you and want you to reach out when you need us. We also want to be transparent about our wait times and processes to help you have positive experiences when reaching out for care. We are working on ways to help improve wait times and improve your experience when connecting with our clinics, and appreciate your understanding as we do this.

## Updated COVID-19 information

We have received many calls from patients requesting updated information about COVID-19. We know it continues to be challenging to determine how to stay safe and make the right informed decisions for you and your family. Please see below for current, reliable, and easy-to-follow information from our trusted colleagues:

- If you **think you have COVID**, and you are wondering if you should call us, [click here](#) for more information about how to self-manage at home, and when to connect with us.
- If your **child is COVID positive**, [click here](#) for some information to help support your child, and when to connect with us.
- If you are a close contact of a COVID case, [click here](#) for more information about what you should do.
- If you want to know more about **what type of mask** you may wear to reduce your risk of infection, [click here](#) to read more.

- If you would like to know more about **boosters and fourth doses of the COVID vaccine**, and if you are eligible, read the information on [this page](#).
  - *We are not currently offering COVID vaccines in our clinics. We encourage you to connect with your local [pharmacy](#) or [community clinics](#) for more options.*
- If you want to know more about **medications** that reduce the severity of COVID infections [click here](#).
  - *Please note these medications are not needed for everyone and should only be given if you currently are sick with COVID and fall in a high risk group. This medication will not be prescribed to patients to have on hand in case they get COVID.*

If you still have questions, please to visit the [Confused about COVID](#) website for up to date and reliable health information.

We encourage you to read and save these resources to help you and your family continue to navigate COVID and its impacts. Whenever possible, we recommend self-management of COVID symptoms or navigating what to do if you become a close contact. If your symptoms become severe or unmanageable or you fall into high risk groups, we encourage you to call and connect with our team. This will help us continue to prioritize and provide quality and timely medical care to all our patients.

### Upcoming patient webinar

A reminder that our first webinar focused on environmental sustainability will be held **Tuesday, May 31, from 6:30-7:45 p.m.** This webinar will be delivered in partnership with Toronto Environmental Alliance (TEA) and Community Resilience to Extreme Weather (CREW). Please click the link below to learn more and register!

[https://ca01web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_ch02pyBXTMG2uq4fKII3Wg](https://ca01web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_ch02pyBXTMG2uq4fKII3Wg)

### Long Weekend Clinic update

With the upcoming May long weekend, please note our clinics will be closed on Monday, May 23. **We will be running an Urgent Care Clinic at our 95 Homewood Ave. location on Monday May 23 from noon - 4 p.m., with last patient registration at 3:30 p.m.** Our regular urgent care weekend clinics will be running on May 21 and 22. For more information about Urgent Care clinics and



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after-hour services, please visit our [website](#).

Take care and be well,

*SMHAFHT Leadership Team*