

Practice Policies Re Safety During Covid-19

In-Person Service Prioritization:

All in person pediatric visits are permitted per Phase 1 DPH guidelines. As an exclusively pediatric practice, Phase 2 non-urgent care regulations are inapplicable. Telehealth visits will be continued to the greatest extent consistent with clinical efficacy, as explicated below.

Families are informed that virtual telehealth video visits are preferred, as per Massachusetts Department of Public Health guidelines.

New Patient Policy:

All initial new patient visits will be seen virtually using a video visit. After this visit, when available and appropriate, developmental and behavioral testing will be conducted in-person. Priority for testing sessions is given to young children with suspected autism spectrum disorders due to the need to get services in place as early as possible. Following testing, Dr. Gershon will complete scoring (where applicable) and compile and interpret findings. A third visit, for feedback, will then be conducted virtually with the patient's parents or other legal guardian(s).

Established Patient Policy:

Established patients who are under care for medication management will periodically need to come in for an in-person physical examination. The frequency of this depends both on the child's age, other health conditions, and on the kind of medication changes have been made. Dr. Gershon will typically see you and your child for a virtual session prior to determining whether the next session should be virtual or in-person.

Patients are required to contact the practice virtually before any in-person visit. In the case of an emergency, please call 911. This practice does not provide emergency services.

Personal Protective Equipment Policy:

Per Department of Public Health (DPH) guidelines, all practice healthcare providers (HCPs) will wear surgical or procedure masks for the duration of any in-person visit. Should supplies so necessitate, masks may be worn by healthcare providers continuously through several patient visits, but regulations require that in this case, the following guidelines be obeyed:

- The facemask should be removed and discarded if soiled or damaged.
- HCPs must take care not to touch their facemask. If they touch or adjust their facemask they must immediately perform hand hygiene.
- HCPs should leave the clinical care area if they need to remove the facemask.
 - Facemasks should be carefully folded so that the outer surface is held inward and against itself to reduce contact with the outer surface during storage. The folded facemask can be stored between uses in a clean sealable paper bag or breathable container.
- Patients will be required to obey the Patient Mask Policy.

Workforce Safety Policies:

In order to comply with DPH regulations, the following workplace policies are enacted:

- All services will include the minimum number of HCPs to provide said service.
- All HCPs must wear face masks at all times when in clinical areas.

- Sufficient physical distancing between HCPs and patients will be ensured to the greatest extent possible.
- The Employee Covid-19 Symptom Screening Policy will be obeyed.
- All patients will be required to obey the practice Patient Mask Policy.

Patient Mask Policy:

- All patients and companions will be required to wear mouth and nose coverings, except in the those cases outlined below, as required by the DPH April 10th Advisory Regarding Face Coverings and Cloth Masks.
- Exception: Patients under the age of 2.
- Exception: Patients with difficulty breathing.
- Exception: Patients who may be unable to remove said face covering without assistance.

Employee Covid-19 Symptom Screening Policy:

- Should any clinical employee present symptoms for Covid-19, or have probable recent exposure to the virus, all of their patients will be rescheduled until after a negative testing result is returned for Covid-19. In the event of a positive test, the employee will isolate for 14 days and then be tested again, with resumption of patient scheduling dependent on a negative result.
- Non-clinical employees will work remotely.

Patient and Companion Screening Policy:

All patients and companions will be called a few days prior to a scheduled appointment and screened for symptoms of or recent exposure to Covid-19. The following applies to all children who have been scheduled for an in-person visit, regardless whether a new or established patient:

Should your child or any member of your household have any fever, cough, nasal symptoms, shortness of breath, diarrhea or other concerns for infection we will ask you to reschedule for a time when COVID-19 testing of the member of the family experiencing symptoms has been completed and your child is considered to be COVID-19 free. We will work with you as best we can to find a mutually agreeable alternate time.

If you have travelled out of state, per Massachusetts Department of Public Health guidelines, as of August 1, you are required to quarantine for 14 days and we are unable to conduct a developmental-behavioral pediatrics visit. Exemptions apply for “lower risk” states. As of July 26, 2020, that includes the following:

- | | | |
|---------------|-----------------|----------------|
| • Connecticut | • New Hampshire | • Rhode Island |
| • Hawaii | • New Jersey | • Vermont |
| • Maine | • New York | |

Families are urged to contact Dr. Gershon at 781-856-6530 of any concerns that may lead to rescheduling their in-person visit.

Patient Companion Policy:

Due to the Phase 1 Re-opening Guidance for Non-Acute Care Providers, section C.3, we have the following companion policies:

- All patients under the age of 18 may bring any number of adult companions. This is in compliance with DPH policies regarding pediatric patients.
- All patients over the age of 18 are encouraged to minimize the number of companions, but are still permitted to bring any number of companions, as necessary.

Infection Control:

- Patients will be asked to wait outside the practice, rather than in the normal waiting room.
- Hand sanitizer will be provided for patients and staff.
- Patients will be scheduled at least 15 minutes apart.
- During a visit, patients will be isolated from each other with the exam room closed.
- All rooms will be thoroughly cleaned and appropriately ventilated between patient visits per CDC recommendations.