

## Your Health and Safety are important to us at Portland Gastroenterology Center

During the coronavirus pandemic, our endoscopy center has been limiting procedures to emergent cases only, where a delay would be immediately harmful to a patient's wellbeing. This reduction in services has been essential to help slow the spread of this disease.

Digestive diseases and disorders have not gone away during this time. We have not forgotten that patients are waiting to receive care for issues unrelated to coronavirus. Procedures that could wait over the past six weeks were put on hold. Some of these procedures can no longer wait. Therefore, we have been actively planning how to increase access to endoscopy services, once this has been deemed safe.

We are following guidelines from the national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, as well as monitoring day to day developments in the State of Maine. In keeping with these guidelines, over the coming weeks we will be performing a broader range of diagnostic and therapeutic procedures. We will be taking the following steps, among others, to safeguard the health of our patients and staff, and society in general.

1. **Prescreening at the door:** everyone entering our facility will be greeted by a staff member who will ask a series of screening questions. This is not meant to alarm anyone, and all patients, doctors and staff members are asked the same questions.
2. **Social distancing**
  - Fewer patients in unit
  - Wider spacing of seating in waiting areas
  - Fewer, more specialized teams of staff in the unit
  - Drivers asked to wait in the car
3. **Infection control**
  - Continuing our meticulous scope cleaning protocols
  - Aggressive, comprehensive cleaning of procedure rooms after every procedure
  - Frequent cleaning of restrooms, waiting rooms, recovery bays and door handles
  - Masks for everyone entering the facility. Due to limited supplies, we encourage you to bring your own mask (cloth masks are acceptable).

### Procedures

Learn more of "What to expect on the day of your procedure" in our Endoscopy Center under the Patient Resources tab.

### Office Visits

Office visits continue to be provided through video-conferencing telehealth. Telehealth service allows patients to meet with a provider via computer, phone with a camera, or a tablet without leaving your home. Telehealth services can be provided to patients who are physically located in the state of Maine. Under current guidelines, we are unable to provide telehealth services to patients physically located outside the state of Maine. In-person office visits are available on a limited basis.

### Infusions

We continue to provide all of our biologic IV infusions through our Infusion Center to ensure the ongoing health of our inflammatory bowel disease patients. National expert opinion is that continuing chronic maintenance immune suppression is a lower risk than a flare of your disease at this time.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call our office at (207) 773-7964.

We thank you for your continued patience.