

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

Portland Gastroenterology Center continues to follow guidelines from the national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, as well as monitoring day to day developments in the State of Maine due to continued prevalence of coronavirus. The following steps, among others, continue to be taken to safeguard the health of our patients and staff, and society in general.

1. **Prescreening:** everyone entering our facility will be expected to attest to a series of screening questions. This is not meant to alarm anyone, and all patients, doctors, and staff members are asked the same questions.

In the past 14 days –

- Have you had symptoms of fever, cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, or diarrhea?
- Have you tested positive for COVID-19, pending a COVID-19 test result, or had contact with someone who has or is suspected of having COVID-19?

If the answer to any of these questions is yes, please do not come to Portland Gastroenterology Center. Please call us at 207-773-7964 to discuss and reschedule your appointment.

2. **Safety while at our facility**

- All patients and visitors entering our offices must cover their nose and mouth with a mask. This can be with a cloth mask or surgical mask
- Patients are asked to maintain a 6 ft distance during check-in and check-out
- Wider spacing of seating in waiting areas
- No more than 2 persons are allowed in the elevator at a time
- Drivers and family members are asked to wait in their car

3. **Infection Control at our facility**

- 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. We encourage you to bring your own mask (cloth masks are acceptable)
- Hand sanitizer stations are located throughout the facility

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 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.

What You Can Do:

The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus. The virus is thought to be spread mainly from person to person by contact and droplet exposure.

- Wash your hands
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick and groups of people in general
- Stay home if you are sick
- Cover coughs and sneezes with your elbow, not your hands
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth and wear a face covering

If you think that you may have been exposed to the coronavirus, please contact your primary care physician as well as the Maine Center for Disease Control (CDC) at 1-800-821-5821.

Portland Gastroenterology Center is very concerned about the spread of the virus and recognizes the importance of ensuring the safety of our staff while continuing to meet the needs of our patients. Taking preventative measures and following the CDC's guidelines of screening all persons entering our location is our effort to keep everyone safe and to do our best to prevent community spread of the coronavirus.

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

We thank you for your continued patience.