

A message from our medical director

January 18, 2021

Legacy's COVID-19 Precautions

We are now at the worst point of the COVID-19 pandemic so far. This is true on every level – globally, nationally, and locally. Our local hospitals currently have more COVID-19 patients than they have at any time previously, including the peak in late August, and local case and hospital numbers are significantly up following the Christmas and New Year's holidays. One of our local hospitals was down to only one unused ventilator this week. Nearly all of us have now had either family members or coworkers with COVID-19, and many of us personally know one or more people who have died from it.

In spite of all that, however, I can report something remarkable: not one staff member in the Legacy Clinic and Pharmacy operations has had COVID-19 yet. This could change at any time, but it has become very clear that, in spite of our encounters with COVID-19 patients on a daily basis, our staff's greatest risk for contacting COVID-19 comes from our families and other activities outside of work. What I'd like to share is the formula that has kept us safe in our workplace so far.

- We have every patient wear a mask from the time of building entry to exit, except for small children under 2 years old.
- We wear a mask for every patient encounter. If the patient has fever or any respiratory symptoms, we wear more highly-protective personal protective equipment (PPE), including an N95 mask and a face shield.
- We now ask patients to schedule all appointments in advance rather than walking in without an appointment. This allows us to protect both our staff and our other patients from unexpected exposures.
- Most patients with fever or respiratory symptoms are tested for COVID-19 in their car, keeping that encounter in the safer outdoor environment, further protecting our staff (not to mention other patients) from these potential exposures.
- We wear a mask when we are near each other. (We do allow removing the mask when in our own offices or workstations, and we maintain distance when the masks are removed.)
- We do not eat meals together around the table in our conference room. Even though none of us have had COVID-19 yet, I expect this rule to be the factor that allows us to continue to operate when one of us finally does get it, since a meal together the day before someone develops fever would likely trigger several of us getting sick at once.

These precautions may be tiresome, but they are not hard or complicated; they simply require awareness of their necessity and a commitment to stick with them. The current moment is a time to double down on them. These and other similar precautions can and should be adapted to every workplace situation, and by doing so we can continue to protect ourselves and one another and keep our workplaces safely staffed and functional.



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