

BRAMEAST FAMILY HEALTH ORGANIZATION : COVID-19 ADVISORY

We are busy preparing to keep our patients and staff safe in the event of a COVID-19 increase in our community.

We want to reassure you that your safety and maintaining high quality primary care is our priority. We have changed the way we are working in the coming weeks:

1. Visiting your doctor

PLEASE DO NOT WALK IN TO THE OFFICE FOR AN APPOINTMENT. Instead call us at 905-792-2211 first. You will be booked for a 'telephone appointment' based on your request.

If you do have a booked appointment (pregnant patients and babies under 18 months) please call ahead if you are experiencing any symptoms of fever, cough, shortness of breath OR had any recent travel.

2. A) Essential services including routine prenatal care, newborn/baby visits will continue to be seen.

B) Telephone appointments for ALL visits are necessary. Doctors will determine which patients need to book for urgent appointments. We will try to address all non-urgent appointment needs directly over the telephone.

C) All routine care and non-essential visits are to be deferred for a period of about 4 weeks, including periodic health exams (physicals), well child visits, pap tests, ear syringing, needles.

3. Coronavirus: preventative measures : what you need to do:

There is currently no known vaccine or treatment for COVID-19 so **prevention is key.**

Avoid travel - Especially by air or public transportation, especially out of Canada. If you must (think about what that word really means) travel, choose the most isolated mode of transportation and monitor yourself closely for symptoms once you return. If you have been in a high-risk area, it is advisable to self-quarantine for 2 weeks if you are able to do so, even if you are not officially required to.

Practice social distancing - Avoid social gatherings and crowds. If you have to get together with people, do so in open areas if possible and do your best to stay at least 2 meters (6 feet) away from others. Work from home if you are able.

Wash your hands and don't touch your face! COVID-19 is thought to be spread via "droplets", which means that close contact with those who are infected will put you at risk. Droplets are spread from infected patients when they cough, sneeze, or breathe. The most common way for them to enter your body is when you touch your face (eyes, nose and mouth) with contaminated hands. The best way to wash your hands is with soap and water for 20 seconds. Hand sanitizer doesn't work as well but is better than nothing. Wearing gloves is not recommended for the general public, as it often gives people a false sense of security and they become lax with their hand hygiene, thinking the gloves will protect them.

We do not have the proper testing equipment or personal protective equipment to safely see and assess you without putting ourselves or our other patients at risk. If your symptoms are severe and/or you have an underlying condition which puts you at greater risk, please go to the emergency department of your nearest hospital.

IMPORTANT: there is no treatment for COVID19 unless you have an, otherwise, complex condition, ie. COPD, diabetes, or are immunosuppressed. If you have symptoms you would ordinarily associate with flu, - see chart below - seeing a doctor, going to the ER, or getting tested, will not change the advice/treatment. If you have symptoms you would ordinarily associate with flu (see chart below) the advice will continue to be:

- Stay home, rest, drink plenty of fluids
- Over-the-counter cough and cold meds can help with symptom relief (if it is safe for you to take them), but remember to send someone else to get them for you so you don't expose others to the infection you have.
- Humidifiers and ample hydration are also important.
- **Cough and sneeze into your sleeve and wash your hands frequently** to prevent household spread.
- You and your household contacts may also choose to wear masks to prevent transmission amongst yourselves.

Don't panic! Be rationale and keep yourself informed

COVID19 Symptoms:

<u>Almost Always</u>	<u>Common</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fever	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fatigue	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nausea
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cough	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Muscle Aches	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vomiting
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Difficulty breathing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sore throat	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Diarrhea
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Headache	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pneumonia
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Decreased appetite	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kidney failure
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Runny nose	

How Our Office is Dealing with the Pandemic:

Effective immediately, our clinics have moved to virtual care for all patients, with the exception of those who have essential (as defined by the clinician) needs for in-person care. You may continue to book appointments by calling or booking online, however, please cooperate with screening at multiple stages, if it is deemed essential that you come in the clinic. **Please be honest and up front about your symptoms and exposure history so you do not put our office staff or others at risk.** Appointments booked will be triaged for the most appropriate mode of virtual care, and you will be contacted by your physician either through phone call, email, or video call.

We ask patients to bear with us if we experience staffing shortages. We will continue to make every effort to maintain our office services as much as possible with the minimum disruption to your care. We may be slower to answer phone calls or messages. Please be patient and bear with us as we do our best to meet your needs during this outbreak. Our staff are very dedicated to continuing to provide the care you need. It will just look a little different than usual.

Thank you for your cooperation and understanding! We will continue to keep you informed as we learn more about the pandemic. In the meantime, please do your part to help keep us all safe.

Be well.

Self Assessment : If you think you have 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) :

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-self-assessment>

If you think you have 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms or have been in close contact with someone who has it, use this self-assessment to help determine if you need to seek further care.

If you are having difficulty breathing or experiencing other severe symptoms, call 911 immediately. Advise them of your symptoms and travel history.

This information is not intended to provide medical advice. If you have medical questions, consult a health practitioner or your local public health unit.

If you are feeling unwell with any of the following symptoms:

- Fever, new cough or difficulty breathing (or a combination of these symptoms)?
- Muscle aches, fatigue, headache, sore throat, runny nose or diarrhea? Symptoms in young children may also be non-specific (for example, lethargy, poor feeding).

And have experienced any of the following:

- Have you travelled outside of Canada in the last 14 days?
- Does someone you are in close contact with have COVID-19 (for example, someone in your household or workplace)?
- Are you in close contact with a person who is sick with respiratory symptoms (for example, fever, cough or difficulty breathing) who recently travelled outside of Canada?

If you answered yes to these questions, you should seek clinical assessment for COVID-19 over the phone.

The majority of COVID-19 illnesses are mild. A clinician can help guide whether you will require further care or potential testing in person. Please use one of the following options:

- Contact your primary care provider (for example, family doctor). Let them know that you have used this self-assessment tool.
- Contact Telehealth Ontario at [1-866-797-0000](tel:1-866-797-0000) and speak with a registered nurse. Let them know that you have used this self-assessment tool.

If you start to experience worsening symptoms, please visit your local emergency department. Call before you go and let them know you have used this self-assessment tool.

If you answered no to these questions, it is unlikely that you have COVID-19.

You should:

- Continue to monitor your health for a full 14 days after your return to Ontario or have contact with someone who is ill. If you develop any new symptoms, please seek clinical assessment and testing for COVID-19.
- Learn more about [self-monitoring](#).

If you start to feel worse or have questions or concerns about your health, call your local public health unit, primary care provider (for example, family doctor) or Telehealth Ontario at [1-866-797-0000](tel:1-866-797-0000).