

Dear patients,

We are seeing a spike in respiratory illness, especially in children, and receiving a high volume of calls for appointments. Please see the information below to help you understand what you can do at home, when you should call our office and when you need to go to the emergency room.

### **What you can do at home**

Most people with respiratory symptoms – whether from flu, COVID, RSV (respiratory syncytial virus), or other infections – will recover on their own and do not require prescription medication. We recommend patients self-isolate and rest, drink plenty of fluids and take analgesics (as needed) for headaches or muscle aches until they are better.

### **When to call our office**

- There are special considerations for respiratory illness in children. [Family Doctor Tips on Caring for Children with Respiratory Symptoms](#) is a resource which answers many common questions – including when to call the doctor’s office.
- If you or your child are at [higher risk for complications from respiratory illnesses](#), please call our office right away so we can determine whether you need to be seen and should be prescribed treatment.
- You may be offered a virtual appointment if it is appropriate for you. This is one way we can determine if you need to be seen in person.

### **When to go to the emergency room**

Emergency rooms are currently facing capacity issues. However, in some cases, it is the only place to get the right care. Use this guidance to help determine if [you](#) or [your child](#) need to visit an ER.

### **Wear a mask**

Please be reminded that masking is required in our clinic – masking reduces the spread of viruses and protects others, including our patients who have cancer, are elderly or are especially vulnerable for other reasons. Please bring your mask to your appointment and wear it throughout your visit, including when you are alone in an exam room.

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Our office (like most clinics at present) is handling much higher numbers of patient calls and visits than usual, including care “backlogs” from the pandemic. For some routine, non-urgent care (e.g. well child visits not associated with immunization, follow up for chronic disease that is stable), wait times for your appointment may be longer – we appreciate that you continue to be patient with us as we work hard to help you.

**We are always here for you and will ensure you get the care you need, when you need it.**