

May 1, 2020

Dear Patients,

Happy May Day! The pandemic has been a wonderful chance to practice being mindful and present in the moment. I definitely have learned how to do this better, sometimes with strength and grace and other times while kicking and screaming along the way! Now, as our state begins to take steps towards reopening, I will readily admit that I am enjoying looking towards the future again!

I have created a “re-opening plan” for the office (although I was never truly closed) to help guide us through the next few months. I hope that sharing this with you will help us get back on track and keep everyone as safe as possible as we expand our activities.

For the next two weeks, I plan to continue to offer visits for urgent issues and well-child visits for children under two years of age. The only difference in these next two weeks is that if you have an urgent issue and would like to be seen in the office, rather than through a virtual visit, that is now possible. It will be a chance for us to see how some of our new protocols will work.

Starting on May 18th, office hours will be from 12-5pm Monday - Thursday (this will allow me to spend the mornings helping my children with schoolwork). I will continue to see patients for urgent issues, in person or virtually. I will also resume all well-child visits that have been previously scheduled and begin seeing patients for routinely scheduled annual wellness visits. In addition, we will begin drawing labs again for select patients (those who are already in the office for a scheduled visit or those whom I have specifically asked them to get their bloodwork done at that time). Appointments will be spaced to minimize having more than one patient in the office at any one time.

And, finally, starting June 15th, assuming that things are going well, we will resume with our pre-pandemic hours, usual scheduling (taking care to continue safe distancing measures) and will start to catch-up on the routine visits that were cancelled during the past 6 weeks. Rest assured, if you have a concern or would like to reschedule sooner, we will do our best to make that happen. Otherwise we will be in touch in a few weeks about rescheduling your cancelled appointment. Also, if you prefer a virtual visit over an in-person visit, I will continue with these whenever it is appropriate.

The following guidelines will help keep us all safe as we come together back at the office:

• Please come alone to your appointment unless you need assistance from a family member.

In an effort to reduce the number of people in the office we will not be able to accommodate extra family members, children or friends. If they come with you, they will need to wait outside. Pediatric patients should come with one parent/guardian and siblings should be left at home unless they are also scheduled to be seen for an appointment. We are trying to schedule family members at the same time whenever possible.

• If you arrive early for your appointment we ask that you wait in your car or on the bench we have set just outside the office until your scheduled appointment time.

- Although we love to see you and miss you dearly, whenever possible, please call or send a message rather than stopping by with questions or concerns.

- **Everyone entering the office who is older than two years of age is expected to be wearing a face mask** upon arrival - no person will be permitted to enter the office without one, (all staff members will be required to wear masks as well). If you do not have a face mask, we will have a limited supply of cloth masks that can be used and then, as you depart the office, placed into a soiled laundry hamper for washing/decontamination and reuse.

- When you arrive for your appointment, hand sanitizer will be available at the door and we ask that you apply it as you enter the office. If you prefer to wash your hands in the restroom we ask that you proceed directly to the restroom upon arrival.

- Upon entering the office you will be immediately directed to Dr. Seed's office or the pediatrics room for your visit.

- When your visit is completed, we will schedule a follow-up visit from the exam room and ask that you proceed directly to the “exit” door. Any copays or outstanding balances on your account should be made prior to your appointment via the “make a payment” link on our website (coming soon!) or you can call with credit card information or ask to have your credit card on file charged. Once again, we are trying to limit the chance of multiple patients being present in the same space in the office at the same time.

- We will continue to use the protocol that we previously outlined for any patients who are feeling ill. If you are feeling ill we ask that you contact us prior to entering the office so we can make arrangements to care for you while keeping others safe.

Finally, Jordyn, Page and I will be taking measures to ensure that the office is clean by wiping down high-touch areas on a regular basis, sanitizing exam rooms between patients and, whenever possible, opening the windows in the office periodically throughout the day to promote ventilation.

Whew! It's a new world that we have entered into! I continue to be amazed by how resilient we all are. When my first son was just an infant, I remember thinking about what traits or qualities I most hoped he might develop as a person. One of my greatest hopes is that he develops resiliency. The past 6 weeks have been a test of all of our resiliency and I have been impressed with not only my children but with everyone in our community's ability to adapt and change in the face of such challenging times. I also recognize that in some aspects we have seen the worst of these times and in other aspects, such as the financial strain on our community, the worst still may be to come. I think Greg Kincaid's quote, *“No matter how much falls on us, we keep plowing ahead. That's the only way to keep the roads clear.”* is particularly appropriate for us here in Maine. May we continue to keep plowing ahead, supporting one another during these incredible times.

With deep appreciation and care for each of you,

Christy Seed