

Template Communication to Families

Greetings from [Practice Name]! We hope this finds you and your family safe and healthy.

This is a trying time for many people on many levels, and families all over are doing their best to protect their well-being. Every family must find its own comfort level with the risks posed by a wide range of activities.

We're aware that many individuals may still be avoiding in-person visits out of concern for potential COVID-19 infection. Our practices are providing care by telehealth, whenever possible, to help protect our patients and staff from potential exposure to the virus.

However, the CDC also emphasizes that some essential well-visit functions, such as routine immunizations, cannot be performed over the phone – and that vaccine-preventable diseases continue to pose a significant threat to your child as well as to public health. Therefore, we encourage you to maintain your child's well-care appointment schedule.

To help ease any concerns you may have about visiting our practices, we thought it might be helpful to explain all the measures we have put into place to maximize your safety as well as the safety of our staff.

- Appointments for patients with a “non-contagious” issue are either being conducted via telehealth, or scheduled during our well-visit hours, which are [insert hours here].
- Sick-visit appointments are either being conducted via telehealth, or scheduled during our separate sick-visit hours, which are [insert hours here].

We have developed the following protocols for such visits: [discuss specific procedures for sick patients such as calling at arrival and remaining in vehicle until you have further instructions, payment and forms online, etc.].

- We've also made additional changes such as enhanced disinfection of our practice between visits, maximizing physical distancing in our waiting rooms, and daily screening of our staff.
- Furthermore, we've instituted [new no-touch (or physically distanced) check-in procedures, staggered appointment times, universal masking, removal of toys, books, and magazines, and virtual check-out procedures].
- We ask that ONE healthy parent or guardian accompany patients to all in-person visits. Please avoid bringing additional children to appointments at this time.

If your child is behind on immunizations, or is due for a vaccine in the near future, please call XXX-XXX-XXXX to schedule an appointment. If you are unsure whether your child is up to date or in need of a vaccine, please ask our staff to check your child's immunization records.

Please know that our practice's infection control measures are in line with current guidance from the CDC and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). We are confident that these policies will help us maintain the best possible health environment for your family, and for all of our patients and staff.

Sincerely,

[Insert Practice Name]

This communication is not an endorsement of any specific measure. Each health care provider practice will need to determine what measures may be appropriate in light of the practice's specific circumstances to determine how best to manage patient visits.

At this time, there are no clinical data related to the administration of any of the Merck vaccines in patients diagnosed with COVID-19; therefore, the safety and efficacy of Merck vaccines in this population are not known.

