

Example Practice Memo

Memo: Practice guidelines to prevent coronavirus spread.

Date: [Insert Date]

To: All Employees of [Insert Practice Name]

In the coming months, maintaining a clean/safe workplace will need to be at the forefront of your thinking as we navigate the SARS-CoV2 pandemic. The situation demands that we adopt some new practices in order to keep our employees and patients safe. The guidelines outlined below will need to be the **NEW NORMAL** for the foreseeable future, and we ask that everyone work together as a team to ensure our safety and the safety of our patients.

What can we do to prevent transmission of SARS-CoV-2 in our clinic?

1. Utilize Personal Protective Equipment, as available and in accordance with recommendations from the CDC.

- Gloves
 - Gloves should be worn for specific tasks like direct interactions with patients or when dealing with potential contamination but are not required at all times.
- Basic masks and N95 respirators
 - Currently the CDC recommends using basic masks/face coverings while in public.
 - Masks serve to block respiratory droplets from getting into the air and onto people/the office environment.
 - Basic masks should be worn full time while at work, unless you are alone in a non-public area.
 - Masks should ALWAYS be worn when in close proximity to any other person (even coworkers).
 - Make sure the mask completely covers your nose and mouth.
 - Avoid touching the mask after it is on.
 - N95 respirators will be used by doctors for specific patient interactions on a case by case basis.
- Watch videos on why we wear masks:

Placing an N95 mask (doctors) - https://youtu.be/zoxpvDVo_NI

Masks reduce aerosol spread - <https://youtu.be/kYJvU81DKgk>

How aerosol transmission works - <https://youtu.be/LLzMDvzWeV8>

2. First and foremost, report any symptoms you may be having BEFORE coming to work. Staff members need to be symptom free each day before and during work.

- Most common symptoms of COVID-19 include:

- Fever (above 100F)
- Coughing
- Shortness of breath
- Red eye(s) (conjunctivitis can be a presenting sign of COVID-19)

3. Use effective cleaning agents to disinfect equipment/ common areas (best is diluted bleach solution or alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol).

- Prepare a bleach solution by mixing:
 - 5 tablespoons (1/3 cup) bleach per gallon of water or 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water.

4. Thoroughly wash hands for at least 20 seconds before and after each patient encounter, before eating and after using the bathroom. (Sing “Happy Birthday” twice in your head.)

- Cover every surface of your hands with soap/hand sanitizer while washing.
- Turn the water off with a paper towel so you don't immediately decontaminate your hands.
- Consider keeping short fingernails as they trap less germs.
- See following videos on proper hand washing:

Hand washing demo - https://youtu.be/nEzJ_QKjT14

Why soap is effective - <https://youtu.be/-LKVUarhtvE>

5. Limit to using one phone and one computer whenever possible and maintain social distancing from coworkers.

- Should you need to change phones or computers, disinfect between uses.

6. Clean exam room/patient areas with best disinfectant available in between each patient encounter.

- This includes:
 - Pens & clipboards
 - Exam chairs
 - Slit lamps including table tops
 - Counters

7. Disinfect high-touch areas as much as possible

(doorknobs, door handles, waiting room chairs, etc.) Use your best judgement on this.

8. Regulate patient flow to maximize social distancing.

- Limit the number of patients in the waiting room. Ask patients to wait in their car if possible.
- Ask patients to limit the number of people who accompany them.
- Maintain and practice social distancing so as not to physically contact the patient outside of clinical necessity, including handshakes, hugging, etc.
- Remove/space out chairs in the waiting area.

9. Keep yourself and your family safe while you are NOT at work.

- Wear a mask when in public per CDC recommendation
 - Mask for personal use: <https://youtu.be/tPx1yqvJgf4>
- Make your house a “safe zone” by disinfecting regularly.
 - Note: use the same recommended cleaning solutions as above.
- Consider removing/washing clothes immediately when returning home.
 - Do not shake clothes after removing as it may spread virus on your clothing into the air.