

To our patients,

You will have heard the directive from our Provincial Health Officer, Dr Bonnie Henry, to self-isolate and practice social distancing.

The time to act is now. Our province is in a state of emergency. What we do [today](#) will impact the health of all British Columbians in the weeks to come.

Stay home unless absolutely necessary. No dinner parties. No shopping. No sports, not even outside. Instead, have coffee with a friend online.

Keep six feet, or two metres, away from everyone at all times. That's about the width of a car or two length of two arms stretched out. Call your loved ones and tell them to do the same.

Remind young people in your life that they can get sick from this virus. More importantly, they can be carriers and cause a lot of harm to parents, grandparents, and other loved ones.

We can do this, but we can't wait one more hour or one more day. Let's save lives, together.

The Ministry of Health has just sent a notice to physicians today that we are to suspend all non emergency in person visits. With this in mind, we are moving to almost completely phone/video appointments to protect both you, our patients, and ourselves, who may need to be redeployed in the weeks to come.

I know that many of you suffer greatly from migraines and Botox injections are very important. We will keep assessing our patients needs and assessing the situation as more information and advice from the Ministry becomes available. We are making the best decisions we can at the time, with the information we have available. Remember, things will continue to evolve and change and it our deepest concern that patients are kept safe. New research is showing an extremely large number of patients that have COVID have absolutely no symptoms but are still very contagious. We have to protect our most vulnerable people in our communities.

As you have also most likely heard there is a national shortage of personal protective equipment and doctors do not have access to enough masks, gowns, gloves or hand sanitizer. The Canadian government is working very hard to help this situation as we know that health care providers can unknowingly and unintentionally transmit this virus to their patients. The last thing that we want to do is infect a vulnerable patient.

At this time, we will be answering the phones between 9-12 [Monday-Friday](#) to organize future appointments, assist with prescriptions, provide medical advice etc. For medically urgent questions we will be available by phone.

Sick notes are not required by employers during this crisis. Many xrays/CT scans/MRI's/ultrasounds are also being postponed, as are elective surgeries.

People, with or without a history of travel, who have respiratory symptoms that can be managed at home, must self-isolate at home for at least 14 days after onset of their symptoms. After 14 days, if their temperature is normal and they feel better, they can return to their routine activities. Coughing may persist for several weeks, so a cough alone does not mean they need to continue to self-isolate for more than 14 days.

What about household contact of a patient with respiratory symptoms?

People who live in the same household as a patient with respiratory symptoms are at higher risk of being exposed. We are asking household contacts to self-monitor for respiratory symptoms for 14 days, and if respiratory symptoms do develop, to self-isolate. As much as possible, household contacts should distance themselves from the patient (e.g. stay in separate rooms, sleep in separate beds and use separate bathrooms if possible).

Here is a link for you to read more about Covid-19 and patients with chronic diseases, and more information on what self isolation really means:

<http://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/clinical-resources/covid-19-care/patient-handouts>

Here is the link to the Covid-19 self assessment tool:

<https://covid19.thrive.health/>

Stay home. Wash hands. Phone friends and family. It matters. Now.

Remember that although I am unable to see you in person, I will be available by phone and video conferencing and I will endeavor to be there for you! Together we will get through this.

I too have been struggling and fear for my friends and family. I read this poem that has given me solace and I hope it will help....

History will remember when the world stopped
And the flights stayed on the ground.
And the cars parked in the street
And the trains didn't run.

History will remember when the schools closed
And the children stayed indoors
And the medical staff walked towards the fire
And they didn't run.

History will remember when the people sang
On their balconies, in isolation
But so very much together
In courage and song.

History will remember when the people fought
For their old and their weak
Protected the vulnerable
By doing nothing at all.

History will remember when the virus left
And the houses opened
And the people came out
And hugged and kissed
And started again

Kinder than before.

By: Donna Ashworth.

Dr. Corrie Graboski and the staff of Bayside Medical Centre

