

DOCTORS OF OPTOMETRY PRIORITIZE PATIENT HEALTH AND SAFETY AS PRACTICES REOPEN

As our nation's response to the COVID-19 crisis enters a new phase and healthcare practices reopen, doctors of optometry are implementing new protocols to provide the care patients are seeking in a safe and healthy environment.



EYE HEALTH NEEDS



PROPER PPE USAGE



PRE-SCREENINGS



LIMITED HOURS



ONLINE PAPERWORK



SOCIAL DISTANCING



TELEHEALTH



OD SHIELD USE



POST-EXAM

- **As primary health care providers, doctors of optometry are available to provide a range of comprehensive eye health and vision care.** Whether you have eye health or urgent care needs, concerns about your eyes or vision, such as digital eye strain or dry eyes, or it's time for a comprehensive eye exam or contact lens evaluation, the public can continue to look to doctors of optometry as a trusted source for their primary eye care needs.
- **Optometry offices are following the proper protocols and reopening guidance.** Doctors of optometry continue to closely monitor federal, state and local guidance related to infection prevention measures and implementing appropriate procedures within the office to keep patients safe.
- **Screening protocols will likely be implemented to test patients and visitors for symptoms of COVID-19** prior to and/or upon their arrival at the facility, and may involve the use of non-contact temperature readers. Patients exhibiting any COVID-19 signs or symptoms, such as loss of the sense of smell or taste, or have fever or cough, will be rescheduled and asked to contact their primary care physician (PCP).
- **Offices may initially reopen with a limited number of hours,** with priority being given to patients who require more urgent or emergent care. Practices may not be operating at full staffing capacity, and patients may experience longer wait times in order for staff to properly clean and sanitize between patients.
- **The office may request for you to fill out any necessary paperwork in advance or online** (changes in insurance, medical history, etc.), to prepare and bring to the office to reduce the amount of time you have to spend sitting in the waiting room filling out the papers.
- **In order to effectively manage patient flow and ensure appropriate physical distancing, offices may implement various safety protocols,** including, but not limited to:
 - Restricting the number of people that are allowed inside exam rooms and in waiting areas at any given time. Unless there is an extreme case (e.g. the patient is a minor or needs assistance with mobility or communication), consider going to your appointment alone or leaving your guests in the car.
 - Requesting that patients stay in their car and call into the practice to announce their arrival. A staff member may meet them in the parking lot to take their temperature (utilizing a non-contact thermometer), ask a few COVID screening questions, and make sure the patient has a face mask and gloves.
 - Keeping the front door locked to prevent people who have not been screened from entering the office.
 - Dividing the practice into multiple zones, where only one patient is permitted in one zone at a time.
- While practices reopen for essential routine and urgent care, **doctors of optometry may continue to offer telehealth consultations for patients.**
- **When inside the exam room, the doctor may use a special plastic breath shield** on the slit lamp machine to look into your eyes. They may also wear a mask with a plastic shield over their eyes.
 - If you need to cough or sneeze during your exam, move back from the microscope. Bury your face in the crook of your arm or cover your face with a tissue. You should also wash your hands with soap and water immediately after.
- **You may be asked to wait to speak until after your eye exam is complete.** Once the doctor is a safe physical distance away, they can talk with you and answer questions you may have.