



ASCENTIST

EAR, NOSE & THROAT

A message on COVID-19 from Ascentist Ear, Nose & Throat

In response to the COVID-19 global pandemic, Ascentist Ear, Nose & Throat is taking immediate action from a position of preparedness. COVID-19 is in our communities and will be for the upcoming future. We have been listening to public health leaders, local health departments, and international experts. We have been consulting with other health care institutions in the area. We are doing our best to adapt to what we have learned and have developed actionable steps to prioritize the safety of our staff, our patient families, and the communities we serve. Our immediate goal is to keep our offices open to take care of our patients. Even in the face of COVID-19, other medical conditions require specialized medical care.

Effective immediately and at all Ascentist Ear, Nose & Throat locations:

- Patients will be properly assessed for COVID-19 risk (via phone, online, or in person) prior to being allowed into any clinical care areas. If deemed to be at risk, patients will not be allowed into clinical areas. Bear in mind, COVID-19 testing is not available at any Ascentist Ear, Nose & Throat location.
- After being assessed as low-risk for COVID-19 exposure, every attempt will be made for patients to be taken directly from the screening area to an appropriate exam room.

To accomplish this, you may notice the following changes:

You are going to be asked more questions.

We are obligated to help our local health department trace the movement of this virus through our community. Your history of potential exposure and travel history are possible clues to you and your family's risk. We are screening every visitor prior to entry into our clinical areas. Our patients are being screened through our online registration process and via phone prior to entry. We ask that you reply honestly, so we can offer you the care you need while best ensuring the safety of all patients and our clinicians. If there is any worry of exposure, you may be asked to reschedule. If you are already there and there is a potential risk you may be asked to go back to your car, and you will be contacted to coordinate next steps. We will only be seeing "well" patients. We will be rescheduling patients with acute illness. To be considered a "well" patient

you must be fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication prior to their scheduled appointment.

The waiting room may be limited, we may ask you to wait in your car.

After being screened by our front desk staff, you may be directed immediately to an exam room where we will update your information, complete any business details, and examine our patients. While we attempt to limit the waiting room and direct room our patients, you may be asked to return to your car to wait until an exam room is available. We apologize for the extra walk back to the parking lot and the extra time this may take. One of the best ways to decrease the immediate impact and flatten the curve is to practice social distancing by limiting time spent in our waiting room. We understand, if you wish to reschedule.

Our cleaning procedures are heightened.

We are increasing the cleaning protocols in our offices. Areas will be cleaned throughout the day, in addition to the routine cleaning we have always provided.

No one will come to work sick.

Our policy at Ascentist Ear, Nose & Throat, has always been for our employees to stay home when sick. With that we are preparing for a larger number of staff being gone at once. This may result in appointment cancellations with short-notice or a change in location for your scheduled visit. Please understand as we work through these challenges. We appreciate your patience and ask that you listen to messages carefully and be prepared for last-minute changes.

We are protecting those at greatest risk.

We are asking that our patients make their best effort to limit each visit to only the scheduled patient. This means no additional guests or family members will be allowed in the waiting room or in the exam room. For children, we are asking that only one caregiver attend with them. Additional partners and caregivers may join any visit on FaceTime or speaker phone. We are sensitive to the generation at greatest risk and prefer all people over the age of 60 stay home if not medically necessary to be in a public setting.

Our phone lines are busy.

Our staff are working as fast as they are able, and under the stress of knowing that things may rapidly change. We ask that you please be patient and kind with us. We are communicating to our staff regularly and their primary job is to deliver proactive and helpful messages directly from us to you. In turn, we ask that you respect their advice. Behavior that is verbally abusive, belligerent, or those attempting to offer false information will not be tolerated.

Stay Healthy Tips

There is currently no vaccine to prevent coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). The best way to prevent illness is to avoid exposure to this virus. The CDC recommends everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases, including:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the restroom, before eating, and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.

Please stay tuned for our mobile alerts and social media channels for up-to-date changes. We all know this is a rapidly evolving situation, and our efforts to provide you the safest and most effective care will not stop.