

Parents to Maintain Well-child visits especially when Immunizations are Due

April 1, 2020

To our Parents:

On behalf of everyone at East Cobb Pediatrics, we hope you and your family are keeping well during these strange and uncertain times. COVID-19 has disrupted our lives and we know you have questions about how to protect and care for your children during these uncertain times. Today, we want to provide answers to some important questions:

1) I'm being told to Shelter-In-Place. Should my children still go to their well-visits and get their vaccines?

Vaccines are very important, especially for young children under the age of 2 years.

Vaccinepreventable diseases can cause serious infections and may even cause death. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, we need to make sure our most vulnerable patients are protected against these illnesses. Some vaccines require multiple doses to build up your baby's immunity. If vaccination rates fall, your children could be at risk for these preventable diseases. Kids can even be at risk for these diseases while remaining at home as some viruses are transmitted through dirt and others may be carried by adults who don't show any symptoms. Receiving vaccines will not compromise your child's ability to fight infections from illnesses, including COVID-19. In addition to providing vaccines, your doctor will weigh and measure your child. It is important to follow a baby's growth pattern to ensure that any issues are caught early, before they become a health problem. Visits also include discussions about important developmental milestones, sleep, and bowel habits, which are critical for a healthy, growing child. Please call your Pediatrician for recommendations about whether your child should come in for your well visit appointment. Together, we can weigh the risks of exposure to illness against the benefits of these important immunizations.

2) What if my child gets sick with something other than COVID-19 or has other physical or mental health concerns? The most important thing to do if your child is sick is to call your Pediatrician. Don't overlook health concerns because of COVID-19. Your doctor will let you know if your child needs to be seen. They may even recommend a Telemedicine visit, allowing your child to be seen by a doctor without leaving home. East Cobb Pediatrics is now seeing some sick patients and other visits as specified virtually. Minimizing the number of children coming into the office makes it safer for the patients who do need to be seen in person. Please don't let your sick child get sicker at home because you are afraid to come into the office. Be sure to call your Pediatrician and get their advice. Remember, you and your Pediatrician are a team with your child's best health interests as your number one goal.

3) I have a newborn – what should I do to keep her safe?

Newborns are especially vulnerable to infection, so it's very important that your baby be kept away from anyone who might be sick. There are also important reasons to take your baby to your doctor in the first few weeks after birth. This may seem like conflicting messaging, so here are some concrete ways to keep your baby safe:

a. Restrict visitors because even people who do not have symptoms could be infected and carrying the virus.

b. Ensure that you and anybody who is around your baby practice excellent hand hygiene. This means washing your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds before touching your baby, especially if you have touched any high-use objects like doorknobs, phones, etc. You should also thoroughly clean phones and other high-touch items at least once a day.

c. Take your baby to the doctor for important check-ups. Newborns are at risk for weight loss and jaundice, which can both be concerning. Newborns should have their weight measured and jaundice level checked in the first 3-5 days after birth, and sometimes even more frequently than that. Newborns that did not get tested before being discharged from the hospital also require a heel stick for blood for “Newborn Screening” tests that screen for treatable diseases that can cause severe illness if not identified shortly after birth. Some newborns may also require additional testing based on the screening results taken at the hospital.

4) How will the doctor’s office keep my child safe?

Pediatrician’s offices are working hard to keep you and your baby safe. Many have made significant adjustments to ensure your child’s safety. For example, many practices will only schedule well-visits in the morning, after the office has been fully disinfected overnight. No sick visits are allowed at that time. Other offices have staff walk patients directly from their cars to the examination room, skipping the waiting room altogether. In general, exam rooms are disinfected between each use and staff use masks and gloves to keep germ transmission to a minimum. Ask your Pediatrician what his/her practice is doing to keep your children safe! In summary, we are here to care for your children through this difficult time. Remember that well-child visits, especially those including immunizations, are extremely important now. Your Pediatrician is ready to help you keep your child healthy through well-visits and management of new problems or chronic illnesses. Please call us to discuss your child’s health care needs and how to arrange for them to continue to be protected from illness.