

COVID-19 CLINICAL UPDATE #2

June 4, 2020

Dear Patients and Family Members,

First, we hope you and your families have been staying safe during this incredibly challenging time. We appreciate your patience in allowing us to provide cardiac care through virtual consultation and follow-up and hope we have been able to meet most of your needs through this new approach.

The COVID-19 pandemic, as you will recall, led us to cease on-site operations with respect to in-patient visits as well as cardiac testing effective March 16, 2020. This was ahead of the official state of emergency called by the province of Ontario on March 17 as well as the directive from the Chief Medical Officer of Health (CMOH) to cease non-essential and elective services on March 19, 2020.

Following the directives of the CMOH in a bulletin dated May 26, 2020 to all health care providers that can be accessed at the following site:

(http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/directives/RHPA_professionals.pdf), we at Georgian Cardiology Associates have begun a gradual restart of clinical services effective June 1, 2020.

Our plan will be to slowly reintroduce low-risk cardiac testing with echocardiography and Holter monitoring. Based on guidance from professional bodies and similar outpatient clinics, we will reassess the start time for stress testing but have deferred a start date on treadmill stress testing and stress echocardiography although will continue to reassess this on a regular basis. We ask referring providers to consider referral to RVH for such testing in the interim should they feel it is of an urgent nature. If you or anyone accompanying you on your visit and need to be physically present have symptoms of an infectious illness, your test will be re-scheduled. Patients with any symptoms suggestive of a respiratory illness are asked to call the clinic to re-schedule their testing as symptomatic patients will have their testing cancelled. We also ask all our patients coming in for testing to wear a mask or facial covering for the duration of their testing and ask accompanying members who do not need to be present to wait in the parking lot if possible in their cars. Please note that patients who do not wear a mask will have their testing re-scheduled or cancelled.

For clinical visits with the physician, much of what we have been doing will continue with an emphasis on virtual visits via telephone or telemedicine. This will be at the discretion of your cardiologist but will serve as a means of limiting patients coming through the clinic and respecting physical distancing. We ask patients who live far away to consider signing up for telemedicine through OTN (<https://otnhub.ca/>) such that your physician can use this as a platform for virtual care and please inform the clinic if you have set up this capability so we can make note of it on your chart.

Should you develop any symptoms of fever, cough or difficulty breathing, please contact Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000, the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit at 705-721-7520 on weekdays or after hours at 1-888-225-7851 or your nearest hospital. Since our last bulletin, COVID-19 testing accessibility has increased and thresholds to test have been lowered given community spread. We encourage patients to visit the self-assessment site to determine if they need to visit an assessment centre for testing (<https://covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment/>).

Once again, we apologize for the inconvenience around these measures, but our sincere hope is to continue to help control the spread of infection in our county, province and country. In keeping with our guiding principles, we will strive to provide excellent cardiac care without compromising the safety of our patients, staff and physicians.

Sincerely,
Georgian Cardiology Associates