

NORTHWEST INDIANA EYE & LASER CENTER CORONAVIRUS PROTECTION: WHAT TO CONSIDER AT NORTHWEST INDIANA EYE & LASER CENTER

Precautions from Northwest Indiana Eye & Laser Center-Some You Should Take Too!

- If you have an appointment for a **routine non-emergency** eye exam or follow up visit and you have a cough or a fever, please call us and let us know immediately. We may ask you to stay home. We may reschedule and postpone your visit to a later date.
- If you have or need an appointment for **emergency eye care** such as for pain, redness, loss of vision, double vision, floaters or flashes of light, we may ask you to wear a protective covering or mask, and to wait in a special room so that you won't expose other patients.
- If you have or need an appointment for **medically necessary eye care** such as for an **eye disease or problem follow up visit** for glaucoma, macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy redness, infections, we may ask you to wear a protective covering or mask, and to wait in a special room so that you won't expose other patients.
- If you do arrive for an appointment and you either anticipate or actually do cough or sneeze during your exam, move back from the examination equipment and staff and cover your face with a tissue. Wash your hands with soap and water as soon as you can.
- If you arrive for an appointment, we may ask you to wait outside, or in your car, instead of in the normal waiting room. This is to protect you, the other patients and the office staff from germs that could circulate in crowded lobby or waiting areas.
- **It may be necessary to postpone your non-emergency or elective eye surgery procedures.** This will depend on your overall health status and surgical clearances from your PCP, whether you have already had a partial or first stage of your eye surgery completed and the need to save the surgical supplies, including masks and face shields, for emergency situations.
- If you arrive for an appointment you may see staff or doctors wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) such as masks and/or plastic shields over their faces or eyes, or even placing plastic barriers or breath shields between you and them during the examination. These precautions help block the exchange of breath between patients, staff and doctors. **Our doctors and may ask you to wear a mask or shield if they feel that you are at risk.**
- **If you wear contact lenses, switch to glasses for a while** since contact lens wearers touch their eyes more than the average person.
- **Wearing glasses may add a layer of protection.** Corrective lenses or sunglasses can shield your eyes from infected respiratory droplets, but they don't provide 100% security. The virus can still reach your eyes from the exposed sides, tops and bottoms of your glasses. **If you're caring for a sick patient or potentially exposed person, safety goggles may offer a stronger defense.**
- **Stock up on eye medicine prescriptions if you can.** Try to make sure you have enough to get by if you are quarantined or if supplies become limited. If your insurance allows you to get more than 1 month of essential eye medicine, such as glaucoma drops, you should do so. Some insurers will approve a 3-month supply of medication in times of natural disaster. Ask your pharmacist or doctor for help if you have trouble getting approval from your insurance company. And as always, request a refill as soon as you're due. Don't wait until the last minute to contact your pharmacy.
- **Avoid rubbing your eyes.** Everyone rubs their eyes and it can be hard to break this natural habit, BUT not rubbing will lower your risk of infection. If you feel an urge to itch or rub your eye

or even to adjust your glasses, use a tissue instead of your fingers. Dry eyes can lead to more rubbing, so consider adding moisturizing drops to your eye routine. **If you must touch your eyes for any reason-even to administer eye medicine-wash your hands first with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.**

And PLEASE don't forget ...

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) offers general guidelines for preventing the spread of coronavirus and protecting your health:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- You should especially wash your hands before eating, after using the restroom, sneezing, coughing or blowing your nose.
- If you can't get to a sink, use a hand sanitizer that has at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your face-particularly your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- If you cough or sneeze, cover your face with your elbow or a tissue. If you use a tissue, throw it away promptly. Then go wash your hands.
- Avoid close contact with sick people. If you think someone has a respiratory infection, it's safest to stay 6 feet away.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Regularly disinfect commonly touched surfaces and items in your house, such as doorknobs and counter tops.