

*Update: May 22, 2020*

## **Stowe Personalized Medical Care**

### **Update for Patients of Stowe Personalized Medical Care from Dr. Bisbee**

**Is it time to relax?** On April 20, there were 812 positive cases. On April 28, there were 862 (50 new cases that week). On May 6, there were 907 (45 cases that week). On May 13 there were 927 (20 cases that week). On May 20, there were 944 (17 new cases that week).

Each week there have been less and less positive cases. As of May 19, there are only 3 people hospitalized with COVID 19 in Vermont. In the US, there have been over 1.5 million positive cases and over 90,000 deaths. Vermont should be proud as we are doing social distancing and wearing masks (at least 80% are). The Governor has given instructions on how to open retail businesses and restaurants. The United States, however, is not doing as well as Vermont.

The population of Vermont is 623,989 (2019). There have been 25,701 tests done (a little deceiving as this included viral nasal swab testing and unproven antibody testing). This means that less than 5% of the population have been tested (assuming one test per patient). We still don't know the prevalence of the virus in our state, however "pop up testing" has started as of May 21, 2019 around the state. Patients can get a test even if they don't have symptoms. Unfortunately, the first pop up testing day basically filled up immediately. New dates will be announced and Vermonters can be placed on a waiting list.

Fortunately, Vermonters are not acting like some in Florida, Georgia and Wisconsin. Remember if things open up inappropriately, you have personal choice and common sense, and can stay safe and wear masks and avoid close contact with others. If a business is not being safe, avoid the business. Do what you can to support local business but stay safe in the process.

Vermont is definitely flattening the curve but it is far from over. If you leave the state and come back you must quarantine for 14 days.

**Should I postpone my medical concerns?** It is not a good idea to postpone any significant medical concerns. Getting an x-ray evaluation or getting your blood drawn can be done safely. Copley Hospital requires screening when you arrive in the hospital, pre-registration is required and **appointments need to be made for ancillary services before you arrive**. When you enter Copley front doors, a staff member will take your temperature and screen you for symptoms.

Specialists are using Video conferencing and phone virtual visits and consultations do not have to be postponed. Non-emergent medical tests and appointments can be done now using proper restriction. If a medical office is not asking patients to wear masks and follow guidelines, you should avoid going to that office.

**General recommendations:** Elderly patients should continue to stay at home as much as possible. Patients with medical conditions and/or are over 70 years old should make arrangements to get groceries delivered. Buy 1-2 weeks of groceries at a time. A cloth mask is recommended when you are near other people (6 feet safety zone). You do not need to wear a

mask when you are by yourself, in your car or outside walking by yourself but have a mask handy if you are potentially coming within 6 feet of others. Wash hands frequently for at least 20 seconds with soap and water. Avoid touching your face, your eyes, nose with unwashed hands or gloves. Avoid contact with people that are sick. Clean and disinfect objects and surfaces using regular household cleaning spray or Lysol or Clorox wipes.

Governor Scott has given a directive that groups (up to 10 people) can get together BUT 6 feet SOCIAL DISTANCING AND MASKS ARE RECOMMENDED.

**Symptoms to watch for:** Patients with confirmed COVID-19 infection have reported mild-to-severe respiratory symptoms (fever cough and sore throat). Other symptoms may include fatigue, weakness, lethargy and headache. Diarrhea and gastro-intestinal symptoms can also be possible symptoms. Call to discuss your symptoms. Do not go to the hospital or emergency room before you call and speak with Dr. Bisbee.

**Office Hours:** The office is open 9:00 to 5:00 Monday through Friday. Dr. Bisbee is available to help you if you need medical care. We can arrange a video conference, phone conference or office visit for you (if you don't have symptoms). The office door is locked and you should call ahead as many things can be taken care of by telephone. We will call you prior to your office appointment to make sure you are not sick. Dr. Bisbee and staff wear masks and take appropriate precautions. We only have **one patient in the office at a time. Patients are required to wear a cloth mask while in the office.** If you do not have a mask, we will supply you with one at the door. **Patient's family and/or companions/driver are not allowed in the office with the patient at the time of their visit.** Exceptions will be for one parent of a dependent patient under 18 years old. We don't allow anyone to sit in the waiting room. You are taken directly back to the exam room. We wipe down the exam room between each patient.

We have been calling each patient to check on how they are doing and to ask what their individual health concerns are. Well visits, such as follow-up for hypertension and diabetes, physicals, and other **routine appointments can be set up** now because we are using in-office precautions. Call the office at 802-253-5020 or call Dr. Bisbee's cell phone after hours for emergent issues.

**House calls:** Dr. Bisbee will do house calls when necessary. If the patient is suspected of having Corona virus, Dr. Bisbee will wear full personal protective equipment (PPE). Dr. Bisbee will call ahead to make sure he has what he needs to do your house call.

**Staff are safe:** All of the staff have been tested for COVID 19. We plan to do testing for the staff on a regular basis.

**Who should go to the Emergency Room?** If you have a life-threatening medical issue such as a heart attack or stroke, call 911 without delay. If you are not having life threatening symptoms, call Dr. Bisbee first as he is available by phone 24/7. Patients in Lamoille County without a PCP can call Copley Hospital (802-888-8642) to discuss their individual situation.

**Testing for Corona Virus:** Testing for Corona virus is more readily available now. Call Dr. Bisbee to discuss your individual situation. Do not go to the hospital to get tested without calling Dr. Bisbee first. We will make arrangements for you if medically indicated.

**What Healthcare appointments should I cancel?** Routine appointments with specialists are now being done by video conferencing. Dental offices are opening up with precautions. Physical Therapy practices are seeing patients and using appropriate precautions now. Massage therapy, tattoo parlors, barber shops, and "non-essential" businesses are still not open. Some chiropractor offices are seeing patients and using appropriate precautions. If patients are not being asked to wear a mask and social distance from other patients, you are going to the wrong provider.

**Basic recommendations:**

1. Shop when there are fewer people at the grocery store.
2. Buy enough groceries for 2 weeks so you can avoid multiple trips.
3. Wear a mask and gloves when you may potentially be within 6 feet of others.
4. Don't handle food and packages. Look at it and only pick it up if you are going to buy it.
5. Don't bring your own shopping bags into the store.
6. Wash hands as soon as you come into your home.
7. Be kind to others and only buy what you need so others can get what they need.
8. Follow the recommendations. If a grocery store doesn't require you to wear a mask, **YOU should still wear a mask to protect others in your community.**

**What activities can I do?** Walking outside, enjoying the spring is an example of a safe activity when done by yourself or with household contacts. Being out in fresh air is a good thing. Always stay more than 6 feet away from people who are not considered your "bubble". **Your "bubble" is your immediate family that you live with and don't wear masks around when at home.** You do not have to wear a mask when driving in your car by yourself or with your "bubble". You do not need to wear a mask when you are walking down a beautiful Vermont country road by yourself. Be prepared to put on a mask when you get within the social distance zone (6 feet) or others that are not in your "bubble". Gardening, mowing your lawn, and exercising are definitely recommended.

**After hours:** All Stowe Personalized Medical Care patients have Dr. Bisbee's personal cell phone and email, and they can text or call him anytime they have an urgent medical problem.