



Guidelines Issued by the GOA- March 17: Important Info on COVID-19 For Your Practice

Updated 04/20/2020

- All facilities should abide by guidance from the CDC and the U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regarding infection prevention measures and begin a plan to implement appropriate protocols within the facility.
- Determine priorities for preparing office space and clinical areas based on suggested federal and state guidelines for cleaning and sanitizing the medical office and dispensary, and how long this process may take.
- Ensure you have a clear process on sterilizing all equipment and materials, including eyewear
- Take inventory of existing supplies and work to anticipate adequate needs moving forward to maintain recommended levels of cleanliness and sanitation.
- Facilities should continue Telehealth services for patients that are high risk for COVID-19 where appropriate
- Patients should be pre-screened as they call for an appointment (exposure, fever, shortness of breath, cough).
- Educate in advance that patients not requiring assistance with their exam will need to do so without a guest present.
- Maintain locked doors and only allow the maximum number of individuals in the facility as required by order of the state (10 people); others should wait outside or in their vehicle
- Screen patients for exposure to COVID-19 at presentation to the clinic. Using guidelines set forth by the CDC and AOA.
- Screen patients for acute respiratory illness (shortness of breath, fever, and cough).
- Make non-contact temperature readings part of the evaluation during patient screening. (note: non-medical laser thermometers do not have a bolometer and are not accurate enough)
- Sanitize all hands prior to entering the facility.
- Offer patients some form of a facial mask if not already wearing one to prevent exposure.
- Recommend patients wash or sanitize their own hands prior to pre-testing.
- Recommend not using a cover paddle, but rather the patient's own hand for acuity testing.
- Separate the waiting room patients from those entering the office in case anyone comes with a cough and possible fever.
- Limit the number of patients back to the screening, examination, and contact lens area.
- Ensure proper personal protective equipment for staff (masks, gloves, face shields, sanitizing equipment as appropriate)
- Designate an employee to dispense in the optical at the entrance of the facility rather than have patients come into the office.
- Offer to meet patients at their vehicle for pickup of materials.



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- Mail materials to patients (contacts and/or glasses).
- Limit the patient interaction for employees at higher risk for the COVID-19.
- Stagger work schedules and offer paid time off to care for children whose schools have closed.
- Remember to use proper sterilization for instruments such as tonometers, autorefractors, phoropters, etc.
- Employees should wash hands immediately after coming in from outdoors, as well as between each patient interaction if possible as well as check their own temperature regularly.
- Place sanitation equipment at work stations and phone locations to be used for sterilization after each use for phones, desks, or other work tools and equipment.
- Ensure proper cleaning of all areas, equipment, surfaces, and floors prior to leaving the facility
- Recommend sterilization of the soles of shoes or disposable shoe covers
- Communicate with your patients via phone, email or your social media channels if your practice will be closed for an extended period of time.
- Place notices that encourage hand hygiene at the entrance to the workplace and in other work areas where they are likely to be seen.
- Prohibit handshaking and other unnecessary person-to-person contact in the workplace.
- Suspend the use of Personal Identification Number (“PIN”) pads, PIN entry devices, electronic signature capture, and any other credit card receipt signature requirements to the extent such suspension is permitted by agreements with credit card companies and credit agencies.