



Updated: September 30, 2020

## Coronavirus | COVID-19 Update from Avance Care's Chief Medical Officer

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve, our priority at Avance Care is the health and safety of our patients. Adherence to the THREE W's: "Wear a mask, Wait 6 feet back, and Wash your hands" is still important. Fight the urge to fall into "COVID FATIGUE" and continue to follow all guidance to protect yourself from exposure to the virus.

To help promote an environment where the risk of COVID-19 transmission is kept at a minimum, we have developed several "no touch" routines for check in at the office. We continue to promote that coming to an Avance Care practice location is safer than going to the grocery store or to the home improvement center.

Testing continues to be one of the main drivers during the current phase of recovery. Avance Care is responding to the increased demand for testing by offering in-office **Rapid Antigen Testing**. This testing has the advantage of a rapid turn-around time of about 15 minutes, but it's not appropriate for every person who needs a COVID-19 test. The test is not as sensitive as the "send out" test in patients with no symptoms, so it cannot be used as a screening test for asymptomatic individuals. We require a telehealth visit to evaluate our patients who have symptoms of any illness in order to ensure our offices are as safe as possible.

Getting a flu shot this year is the most important action you can take to help our country avoid a "twindemic" this fall and winter. We offer walk-in flu shots as well as curbside flu shots by appointment. Please don't neglect your health care during the pandemic emergency.

**REMEMBER: PRIMARY CARE IS AN ESSENTIAL SERVICE.**

### Telehealth Visits Now Recommended for All Patients

*Telehealth is now the preferred method to conduct a visit with your Avance Care provider.* Telehealth is appropriate to evaluate mild and most moderate illnesses, especially concerns about infection with COVID-19. Telehealth is also appropriate to manage ongoing health conditions like high blood pressure, diabetes, and depression. Some insurers (BCBS and Cigna) even allow us to conduct your annual prevention visit through telehealth. You can find a more complete list of conditions appropriate for telehealth below. Connecting with your provider virtually is a private and secure way for you to get the care you need from home.

Telehealth is also the preferred method to see your Avance Care behavioral wellness and

nutrition providers.

BlueCross BlueShield NC, Medicare, UnitedHealthcare, Aetna, and Cigna are covering telehealth. Self-pay options are also available.

### **When is it appropriate to visit my provider in person?**

While many chronic and acute conditions can be managed by telehealth, you may need or prefer to see your provider in-person. We have taken precautions to keep your visit safe and request you wear a face covering if you visit any Avance Care office. We believe these precautions make our offices safer than going to the grocery store.

We have dedicated specific blocks of times in each clinic for you or your child's wellness visits. Your routine preventive care (e.g. immunizations) remains an essential part of your ongoing medical needs.

### **How to Book Your Telehealth Visit**

Visit <https://carin.avancecare.com/carin/>

\*After making your appointment, you'll receive a call from Avance Care to confirm your appointment will be via telehealth, rather than in-person.

### **What Telehealth Care Means for You and Your Loved Ones**

You may now see your provider using any device with a camera and a secure connection. Here are a few health concerns that can be addressed during your telehealth visit:

- Sore throat
- Cough
- Fever
- Cold and flu symptoms
- Urinary tract infection
- Headache
- Allergies
- Rash & other minor skin conditions
- Pain in back, neck, or limbs
- Contraception
- Chronic condition follow-ups (e.g. depression, ADD, high blood pressure and diabetes)
- BCBS and Cigna Annual Preventive visit (CPE)
- Medicare Annual Wellness Visit

## CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) FAQs

### **What should I do if I have mild cold or flu symptoms?**

If you have mild or moderate illness, we recommend you stay home. Please make a telehealth appointment for consideration of COVID-19 testing. Most people can treat their symptoms at home with rest and the use of over-the-counter medications to treat fever, body aches, cough, and congestion. The illness you spread to an elderly person or an individual with chronic conditions may be much more severe than the symptoms you are experiencing.

Don't go to work if you are ill. Limit exposure to other people if you are sick.

If you are experiencing life threatening symptoms like worsening shortness of breath, seek medical care. Reserve calling 911 for a true emergency

### **I have concern about having COVID-19 or think I may have been exposed to someone with COVID-19. Can I get tested for COVID-19 at Avance Care?**

Yes. We recommend a telehealth visit followed by curbside testing if you and your provider decide you should be tested.

Your medical provider will use CDC guidelines and his/her professional judgement to determine if you need to be tested for COVID-19. If tested, you will self-isolate until the test is reported as NEGATIVE. If POSITIVE, your information will be reported to your local health department.

If you have questions or concerns about COVID-19, the CDC and the NC Department of Health and Human Services are great resource for answers <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html> or contact the North Carolina Division of Public Health <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/public-health/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19-response-north-carolina>. NCDHHS also has a call line at 1-866-462-3821 to address general questions about coronavirus

### **What can I do to stay healthy?**

- Practice good hand hygiene. Wash with soap and water for at least 20 seconds several times daily or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Distance yourself socially as much as possible. Do not attend large gatherings of people.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with your hands.

Maintaining 6-feet social distancing remains important for slowing the spread of the virus, but face coverings help people who may have the virus and do not know it from transmitting it to others.

### **Should I wear a mask if I do not feel sick?**

Yes.

Please wear a face covering when visiting an Avance Care location. The Center for Disease Control now recommends all individuals wear cloth face coverings in public settings where other social

distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g., grocery stores and pharmacies) especially in areas of significant community-based transmission.

It is critical to emphasize that maintaining 6-foot social distancing remains important to slowing the spread of the virus, but face coverings help people who may have the virus and do not know it from transmitting it to others. Cloth face coverings fashioned from household items or made at home from common materials at low cost can be used.

The cloth face coverings recommended are not surgical masks or N-95 respirators. Those are critical supplies that must continue to be reserved for healthcare workers and other medical first responders.

## **Resources**

CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

NC Dept. of Public Health: <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/public-health/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19-response-north-carolina>