

September 2020

Dear Patient:

All of us at the Balmoral Health Group hope this letter finds you and your family in good health. We thank you for your patience and for working co-operatively with us over the last 6 months as we adapt to provide safe and effective healthcare for our patients with the guidance of Public Health COVID-19 recommendations.

Throughout this pandemic, we have continued to provide ongoing medical care to our community with doctors and staff in the office throughout the week to address your health concerns. We wanted to take this opportunity to provide you with some updates on how the clinic is operating and what to expect when you call the office.

**Appointments:** To minimize risk to patients and staff, we continue to provide most care via virtual consults. In-clinic appointments will be booked only if deemed necessary by the doctor. There are dedicated times for well baby checks and immunizations/pre-natal examinations and urgent care as determined by the GP. **As per Public Health recommendations, we will not be providing non-essential in-clinic visits at this time, including annual physicals.**

Please remember that if you are scheduled for a phone consult with your doctor, calls will often say No Caller ID or Private/Blocked, so please answer these calls. If you have a block on your phone, please remove it so we can get through to you

**Office Precautions: What are we doing to keep you safe?**

- **Masks:** please wear a mask to the office at all times.
- **Hand Sanitizer Station:** please use the sanitizer when you enter at the door and on leaving.
- **Active Screening:** you will be screened on the phone and at the door prior to entry for signs/symptoms of COVID-19. If you screen positive, your appointment may be changed to a phone consult or will be re-booked once you are cleared to come in. If you are unwell please call the office and advise us BEFORE you attend the clinic.
- **Plexiglass:** barrier has been installed at reception.
- **Healthcards:** please hold your card up to the glass for us to update your chart
- **Waiting room:** we are limiting the volume of patients in the office at any time, so there should be no more than 2- 3 people maximum in at a time, spaced out by 2 meters.
- **No Walk Ins:** As per WHO and Public Health guidance, we are following social distancing recommendations. Please **do not drop by the clinic** without calling before. We have closed the front door for the safety of our staff, our patients and our community to limit exposure. Patients without a pre-booked appointment will not be allowed in to the clinic.
- **Buzzer System:** There is a buzzer at the front door to notify staff you have arrived.

### **Hours of Operation and Doctor's Schedules:**

Staff are in the clinic Monday through Thursday 8:00 am - 4:30 pm and 8:00 am to 1:00 pm on Friday. In order to reduce patient volume and exposure, each doctor is currently available to see patients in clinic 2 days a week (see below) and available remotely at other times.

|                       | <b>Available in clinic and remotely</b> | <b>Remotely only</b>        |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Dr. Brunt</b>      | Monday, Wednesday                       | Thursday, Friday            |
| <b>Dr. Bukczynski</b> | Monday, Wednesday                       | Thursday, Friday            |
| <b>Dr. Lafleche</b>   | Tuesday, Thursday                       | Monday, Wednesday           |
| <b>Dr. Gullane</b>    | Tuesday, Friday                         | Monday, Wednesday, Thursday |
| <b>Dr. Chen</b>       | Thursday, Friday                        | Monday, Thursday            |

### **Cancer Care Screening:**

- **Cervix Check** – Cancer Care Ontario has now begun a gradual start of screening with Pap tests. Priority will be given to those with recent abnormal testing or concerning symptoms. We will return to routine screening once we are able to build capacity in our schedule for these types of appointments.
- **Mammograms** – routine screening has now begun. These are recommended every 2 years from 50-74 years old. If you have been through the OBSP (Ontario Breast Screening Program), you can call the location you have been screened at previously to book. If not, let us know and we can fax/email a requisition.
- **Colorectal Cancer Screening** – the FIT /stool testing through Life Labs is recommended every 2 years. This has not yet commenced, so we are unable to send requisitions for the kits at this time, as Life Labs requires time to clear the backlog.

**Prescriptions:** If you are running low on your medication, please have your pharmacy fax us with a medication request. We will **not** be accepting renewal requests by phone or email.

**Contacting Us:** We continue to experience an extremely high volume of calls. We are doing our best to triage the calls to ensure patient safety and ensure we are responding in a timely manner. We ask that you not leave multiple voicemails and emails.

Urgent calls are returned same day, non-urgent calls may take up to 72 hours for us to respond to.

### **Flu Shots**

We have not received any information yet from Public Health on when these will be available. Once we have received our shipment and have a plan in place to safely administer to our patients, the information will be posted on our website ([www.balmoralhealth.ca](http://www.balmoralhealth.ca)) and on our outgoing message.

**Due to volume of calls, we are unable to respond to messages left on our voicemail enquiring about the flu shots.**

## **Annual Fees 2020**

We have had numerous enquiries from patients about payment of the Annual Fee for 2020 and some of you have already paid your Annual Fee online.

We realize that these are challenging times and that many people have been financially impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic

We are providing this information for patients who have requested it; payment of the Annual Fee is optional and patients may decide to choose the pay per service option.

Until further notice we continue to provide prescription renewals without an appointment at no charge to patients.

The 2020 Annual Fee will cover 18 months, instead of the usual 12, and will run from now through March 31, 2022.

**Family Fee (including children under 21) - \$235.00**

**Individual / Senior Fee - \$140**

**Single Parent Family/Student - \$100**

**Payment can be made remotely, either by mailing a cheque, made out to your doctor, to the office, or by accessing online Pay Pal payment option through our website at**

**[www.balmoralhealth.ca](http://www.balmoralhealth.ca)**

**Due to COVID restrictions, patients will not be able to drop in to the office to make payment in person**

### **COVID19 Assessments**

- If you have any symptoms concerning for COVID19, please visit a Covid Assessment Centre near you.

**[Self Assessment Tool and Assessment Centre Locations](https://covid19toronto.ca/) : <https://covid19toronto.ca/>**

**[Ontario and Canada Public Health Covid Updates:](https://www.publichealthontario.ca)**

**<https://www.publichealthontario.ca>**

**<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19>**

Please stay safe, keep healthy, support others and we look forward to continuing to work together.

Sincerely,

The Balmoral Health Group