InSight Eyecare Associates Guidelines for Vision Care Protocols 04.27.20

Addressing the COVID-19 Crisis.

Core Principles: Screening, Physical Distancing, Infection Control Practices, Protective Measures

Core Principle 1: Screening

Staff Screening

1. Screen staff for symptoms of COVID-19 upon arrival at the facility. We will have a check list of symptoms with YES / NO boxes. We will put the patients name, the date and the staff person’s initials on the sheet. This sheet will also have a check box for patient temperature check is normal or high. This sheet will be scanned into the patient chart to show we did our due diligence in screening patients.
2. Use non-contact thermometers when available.
3. Any staff member showing signs of being sick should not be permitted to work and should be referred to their primary care provider. The staff member should provide a statement from their family doctor stating that they are ready to return to work.
4. We have ordered 5 KN95 masks for all the staff and doctors. Staff will have a different mask to wear every day. At the end of the day, store your mask in a paper bag marked with the day of the week. For example, on Monday wear the Monday mask. At the end of Monday, return it to the paper bag marked Monday. Tomorrow wear the Tuesday mask. The Monday mask will be virus free in 3 days and ready to wear again next Monday.
5. Dr. Pence, director of clinics at IU, stated that hand washing before and after each patient was more effective than wearing gloves (he quoted several studies). He did not recommend gloves while caring for patients. The exception would be to use gloves and hand washing if the patient appears to have an active eye infection. He also recommended wearing short sleeves, as this allowed better hand washing. (Or roll up your sleeves.)
6. We have ordered disposable shoe covers for all staff and doctors. It appears that the most likely way to care the virus home in on our shoes not our clothes.
7. It is recommended that after work you go straight home and not stop at a store, etc. We do not want to take any possible virus into a store.
8. When staff and doctors reach home, we are to remove scrubs and put them in the laundry. We will buy staff extra uniforms if needed to make this possible.
9. We should be washing our hands frequently at work. We should wash our hands just before leaving for home. Once we are home, we should wash our hands immediately after removing our uniform.

Patient and Visitor Screening

1. Screen patients and visitors for symptoms of COVID-19 upon arrival at the facility. We will have a check list of symptoms with YES / NO boxes. We will put the patients name, the date and the staff person’s initials on the sheet. This sheet will also have a check box for patient temperature check is normal or high. This sheet will be scanned into the patient chart to show we did our due diligence in screening patients.
2. Use non-contact thermometers.
3. Patients will be required to use hand sanitizer when they first enter the office. This is mandated by the state department of health.
4. Patients and visitors showing signs of being sick should be rescheduled, unless an emergency dictates otherwise (like symptoms of a retinal detachment or corneal abrasion or foreign body) and referred to their primary care provider. If a patient should come to the office with a fever or other symptoms and has an eye emergency, the patient will be asked to wear a mask and enter the door directly to exam room 7. The doctor will do all testing. No technician or front desk staff should come in contact with that patient. Full PPE will be used, handwashing, gloves, N95 mask, face shield and disposable surgical gown.
5. Discuss with patients the need to reschedule their appointment if they develop a fever or symptoms of COVID-19 prior to the time of their appointment.
6. Inform patients and visitors in advance that they should wear their own mask or cloth face covering upon arrival at the facility. If they present without a mask or face covering, provide them with a mask to be worn in the facility if the patient is physically able to do so.
7. Masks and cloth face coverings should not be placed on young children under the age of two, anyone with breathing difficulties, or anyone who is unable to remove the mask without assistance. This is mandated by the state department of health, unless there is a reason the patient cannot wear a mask.

Core Principle 2: Physical Distancing Measures

1. Individuals should maintain six feet of distance between each other when practical. Consider using signage, tape, or roping lines to direct patients to appropriate locations. Reconfiguration or removal of some waiting room and exam room seating may be appropriate.
2. Request that patients call or text the office upon arrival so entrance to and movement through the facility can be coordinated by staff.
3. Instruct patients that companions should remain outside the facility and not accompany the patient inside the facility, unless they are a parent/guardian or caregiver.
4. Impossible to schedule the cancelled appointments when I will not be able to see the patients already on the schedule. Dr. Masden will work Saturdays just for the medical patients whose appointments were cancelled.
5. Establish a longer timeframe in between patient appointment slots.
6. Implement curbside dispensing of eyewear when possible. We can also offer to mail glasses to patient and they can call to schedule the fitting. Which is more likely to work?
7. Limit the number of patients and staff members within the optical dispensary area at any one time.
8. All paperwork, including patient registration and history forms, should be made accessible to patients for completion prior to appointments through appropriate methods.
9. Mailing forms to patients
10. Providing a link on the facility website with a fillable and printable PDF
11. Obtaining information over the phone.
12. Facilities may utilize mobile apps that can scan documents provided the information shared via smartphones or other devices is transferred securely.
13. Remove all paper, cups, etc. from front office. Bottled water and coffee will be at the receptionist station. Staff will offer to patients.
14. Put credit card swipe on front desk and ID scanner.
15. Once patients are done in the exam room they will be escorted down the back hall to the front desk. This will minimize contact with patients coming into the clinic area.

Core Principle 3: Infection Control and Disinfection Practices

1. Make hand sanitizer and other sanitary products readily available for patients and staff throughout the facility.
2. Use germicidal wipes to clean exam chairs and all equipment after every patient encounter. We have found it hard to get wipes. We can also use isopropyl alcohol with paper towels for disinfection of countertops, chairs, etc. Our Calvicide can still be used in cases where infection is suspected.
3. Facilities should routinely perform enhanced environmental cleaning of commonly touched surfaces, such as workstations, counters, railings, door handles, clipboards, pens, chairs, and other public area surfaces.
4. Take care in the handling of eyeglass frames and other products to limit opportunities for virus transfer.
5. A staff member can assist a patient in obtaining frames from the selection available and transport them with a tray or other receptacle to the fitting area.
6. Once a patient has completed the selection process, the staff member shall clean each pair in an appropriate manner before replacing the frames on display. A dilution of hydrogen peroxide with water (50/50) is approved by the CDC and the frame manufacturers to disinfect frames and countertops. We have also ordered a UV unit that will run when no one is in the room that will provide additional antiviral protection.
7. Post signage from the CDC with information regarding appropriate safety practices. The requirement for masks and hand sanitization.
8. Register and collect contact information for all patients and visitors entering the facility. The person escorting the patient will also be asked to complete the COVID check list. This will be scanned into the patient’s chart. Patients seen in the dispensary will also fill out a COVID checklist. These will be kept on file for one month. We are REQUIRED BY THE GOVERNOR’S EXECUTIVE ORDER to be able to produce a list of names and contact info for everyone in the office at a given time. This information can be used for contact tracing in the event of a COVID-19 flare-up.
9. The bathroom will be cleaned and disinfected every morning. The doorknobs, faucet handles, etc. will be disinfected 3 times a day.

Core Principle 4: Protective Measures

1. Doctors and Clinical Staff:
2. All doctors and clinical staff should wear masks when interacting with patients. I have ordered a supply of KN95 mask for staff. We will use the disposable mask for patients who need them.
3. If possible, use cotton tipped swabs to lift eyelids when doing procedure or instilling drops.
4. Eye protection and disposable gloves should be considered when clinically appropriate. Staff are not required to wear protective eyewear. But for those who wear contact lenses or are in close proximity to patients, I have ordered protective eyewear. I got one pair for everyone. These are not disposable and will need to be daily (or more) cleaned with soap and water.
5. A barrier shield may also be used around testing equipment due to close contact. We have ordered more slit lamp breath shields for the other rooms. I am also trying to order shield for the traditional phoropters.
6. Doctors and clinical staff members should wash hands before and after every patient encounter.
7. Prevent self-contamination by changing face coverings if they become soiled, damp, or hard to breathe through.
8. Hand hygiene shall be performed immediately before and after any contact with the cloth face covering.
9. Each patient will have contact with only one technician. That technician will complete any testing, making of appointments for referral, etc.

Resources for Optometrists:

Indiana State Department of Health: https://www.coronavirus.in.gov/

CDC Guidance for Healthcare Professionals COVID-19: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/hcp/index.html

CMS: https://www.cms.gov/medicare/quality-safety-oversight-general-information/coronavirus

Indiana Optometric Association: http://www.ioa.org/

American Optometric Association COVID-19 Resources: https://www.aoa.org/coronavirus