

COVID-19

Returning to Practice Guide

RESOURCES TO HELP YOU SAFELY RETURN
TO AN OFFICE-BASED PRACTICE



This guide was developed to help you prepare your practice and your employees to mitigate COVID-19 risks as you return to more normal practice levels.

Visit ProAssurance.com/ReturningtoPractice for frequent updates.

Getting Started

- Keep in touch with staff (conference call, virtual meeting, etc.). Concern for staff's well-being is an important aspect in developing a culture of safety. Evaluate the need for family support to enable staff to return to work.
- Evaluate staffing needs in light of anticipated patient demand. Discuss any employment changes with human resources, if available, or your legal counsel. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) offer a resource for strategies to [Mitigate Staffing Shortages](#).
- Adapt work schedules as required (e.g., full staff, skeleton staff, staggered hours, etc.).
- Stay informed. Visit your state and local health departments' websites often for updates regarding testing and contact tracing.

Prepare the Practice

- Clean and thoroughly disinfect environment of care prior to re-opening facilities.
- Reconfigure office space to comply with social distancing guidelines.
- Perform equipment, supplies, and on-site medication checks, including vaccines and immunizations, for expiration dates. Test and inspect all equipment, including emergency equipment.
- Inventory PPE and develop contingency plans as necessary.
- Review infection prevention policies and update as necessary.
- Refer to the CDC's [Strategies to Optimize the Supply of PPE and other Equipment](#) for additional considerations.

Educate the Staff

- Provide staff education about COVID-19 infection control.
- Educate staff and patients about changes they can expect to be implemented in the office.
- Re-evaluate delegating job responsibilities during emergency periods.
- Reiterate [customer care standards](#) and patient expectations.
- Refer to the CDC's [Train and Educate Healthcare Personnel](#) resource for additional considerations.
- Review safety practices for essential providers returning to work. The CDC has released [criteria for personnel with suspected or diagnosed COVID-19](#).

Diagnostic Testing and Tracking

- Confirm all labs and other diagnostic testing services are operational, along with the availability and timeliness of results.
- Prioritize follow-up of critical diagnostics.
- Ensure follow-up of diagnostic testing, labs, and postponed surgeries prior to emergency/office closure.
- Refer to the American College of Surgeons for these resources: [Local Resumption of Elective Surgery Guidance and Roadmap for Resuming Elective Surgery after COVID-19 Pandemic](#).

Scheduling

- Physicians/providers should review their schedules to prioritize visits for chronic, acute, and well patients.
- Review schedule for postponed elective surgeries, biopsy callbacks, follow-up specialty referrals, lab results, annual physicals, and routine screenings, such as mammography, colonoscopy, and telemedicine visits.
- Consider pre-visit telephonic screening of patients.
- Schedule sick and well visits at alternate times.

Infection Control

- Continue to use and enforce social distancing guidelines.
- Discontinue use of toys, magazines, and other shared items in waiting areas, as well as office items shared among patients, such as pens, clipboards, phones, etc.
- Consider alternate entrances for symptomatic patients, and request patients wait in their vehicles until called by staff. Provide clear signage and directions.
- Develop and/or review plans that reduce the number of staff caring for suspected/confirmed cases, create protocols, and determine isolation requirements.
- Download a [Handwashing: Clean Hands Save Lives Poster](#).

Telemedicine

- Document discussions of telehealth limitations and consent to treatment via telehealth.
- Review [state regulations](#) and status of emergency licensure orders.
- Consider telemedicine for chronic/well visits.
- Follow-up with patients from virtual visits during emergency period, prioritize new patients.
- Download [ProAssurance's Telemedicine Best Practices Guide](#) and [YouTube Video Series](#) for other telemedicine risk management considerations.

Documentation

- Correct errors and addenda per best practices guidelines.
- Re-evaluate/review patient treatment plans.
- Document medication reconciliation.
- Document all patient encounters.

Self-Evaluation

- Reflect on performance strengths and weaknesses in order to identify opportunities in process improvement and patient safety.
- Conduct ongoing quality reviews and self-evaluations.

For answers to specific risk management questions, contact your Risk Resource team at **844-223-9648** or RiskAdvisor@ProAssurance.com.

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