

September 20, 2021

Dear Patient,

As we head into fall, we would like to take this opportunity to remind you of our current office policies and update you on some office changes. Covid has been an extremely trying time for all, and we sincerely hope you and your loved ones are doing alright. As always, Focus Medical is committed to providing timely, quality and compassionate care to all our patients.

We are excited to announce that we have upgraded our email communications to a secure and encrypted service via Hushmail ([hushmail new user information handout](#)). Our office email address remains the same; [info@focusmed.ca](mailto:info@focusmed.ca). Please be advised that if YOU INITIATE an email to the office, the original message you are sending will NOT be encrypted, but the doctor's response and all subsequent messages WILL BE secure. When an email is sent to you, you will be asked to set up a password to view the email. It is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to be the steward of this password, so please write it down in a safe place. Our staff/office DO NOT have access to your password and are unable to retrieve it if it is forgotten. We have trialed this service and are very happy to provide you with a HIPAA approved, user-friendly means of communication with the office. We welcome any feedback or questions you may have regarding this new interface and anticipate a smooth transition.

Appointments continue to be offered both over the phone and in person. As a general rule, unless otherwise specified, any booked appointment (booked [online](#) or by speaking with the staff) will be VIRTUAL. As many have noted during the past year, this is often sufficient to address your queries. Be assured that if your doctor determines an in-office consultation appropriate, you will certainly be seen in the office for this. We ask patients to be mindful of our time and policies; as always, when an appointment is requested for a 'non urgent' reason, you will be scheduled appropriately. Just because your appointment may be over the phone, it is not realistic to expect immediate appointments for non-acute problems. Thank you for your understanding.

To reduce office volumes and comply with public health guidance, there will only be one MD in the office at a time; as has been the case for the past 19 months, your doctor continues to see patients in the office ONE DAY A WEEK, but is working remotely, or in hospital, the remainder of the week.

As a reminder, our rostered patients are fortunate to have access to our AFTER HOURS CLINIC should you require urgent attention and are unable to reach your own family doctor. This information is updated daily on our website ([www.focusmed.ca](http://www.focusmed.ca)) and we encourage you to use this service and NOT VISIT A WALK-IN CLINIC or VIRTUAL WALK-IN from which your doctor is unable to access your notes. Continuity of care is best achieved by keeping all your medical information in one location and visiting other physicians has a negative impact on your family physician's ability to optimize your health.

FLU SHOTS are coming soon! This year, even more than ever, we strongly encourage every eligible individual to receive their annual flu shot when it becomes available. To reduce office volume and time to clean between patients, we suggest patients receive their flu shots at their local pharmacy and notify our office when complete ([info@focusmed.ca](mailto:info@focusmed.ca) or 647-748-1881) so that we can update your file. We will update our website when details are released and do

anticipate having shots offered through our office for children and individuals that prefer this route.

As we have seen through this entire pandemic, public health guidance and information is rapidly changing. We forecast covid vaccines to be available for children very soon, as well as the expanded rollout for 3rd doses in eligible populations. We will NOT be carrying the covid vaccine in our office but remain committed to helping our patients access these services via information on our website. Please book a phone consult if you would like to discuss any vaccine related concerns/questions in more detail with your physician.

Please note that many services are not covered by OHIP, and as such, a fee will apply in these circumstances. Examples include fax prescription renewals, completion of forms, and medical notes (illness, massage, etc). As an alternative, we offer the [ANNUAL FEE](#) which encompasses the aforementioned charges for a 12-month period. Please click on the preceding link for additional information and payment options.

The Focus Medical team is committed to supporting your health and wellbeing during these difficult times. Masking, social distancing, handwashing, vaccination and looking out for one another remain the measures we can control and implement, and we encourage everyone to do their part in ending this pandemic.

Thank you for your patience this past year and to our incredible staff who work tirelessly to assist in patient care and to keep the office a safe place for all.

Wishing everyone a healthy season ahead.

Drs Herman and Stulberg