Dear Patient,

With the arrival of fall, we would like to take this opportunity to remind you of our current office policies and update you on some office changes. Both Covid and Influenza will likely gain traction into the fall and winter; recommendations and availability of vaccinations for both will be **posted on** [**our website**](http://www.focusmed.ca/) when it becomes available.

Cough and cold season is upon us. We would like to remind everyone that **viruses (including influenza and covid) are a normal part of our environment** and, most of the time they **require no medical treatment other than time and rest**. Pharmacists are authorized to prescribe paxlovid (antiviral) if you test positive for Covid.  Provided you do not have significant underlying medical issues and are not experiencing severe symptoms, most viruses (coughs, sinus infections, runny noses and sore throats) resolve on their own in 7-10 days.  Symptoms lasting longer than that may require a visit with your physician. You can find more details in this [cold and flu fact sheet](https://www.focusmed.ca/_files/ugd/4efe57_ec2d7edc19e84c11a356b7ba212ad1a1.pdf).

**Focus medical requires all patients with any respiratory symptoms (fever, cough, runny nose) to wear a mask while in the office.  Thank you.**

In accordance with the Ontario Medical Association suggestions, office physicians continue to offer a **hybrid of virtual and in-person appointments**.  Appointments can be booked online for either modality.  Please be thoughtful when choosing what kind of appointment, you are scheduling; for most concerns, a physical exam is required to properly diagnose and treat you.  For example, there is little value in having a phone consult for “cough” or “abdominal pain”; clearly your MD will want to examine you for such issues, and we ask you to please book accordingly.  If you are unsure what type of appointment is best suited to your complaint, please feel free to ask the front staff.

**To request a Same-day appointment, please phone the office at 9:15am on the day of your query**; our staff will then discuss with you what kind of consultation is in your best interest.

We kindly ask that you be mindful of the fact that our staff are working very hard to  address your needs, and treat them with the respect they deserve. **The doctors at Focus  Medical support our valued front staff and we will not tolerate any disrespect or abuse toward  them.**  Please see our official office harassment policy at [this link](https://www.focusmed.ca/_files/ugd/4efe57_241ac419315d47238d305cb6fb337ca4.pdf) on our website for additional information.

For patient communications we continue to use HUSHMAIL; our secure, encrypted and HIPAA approved means of electronic communication.  Hushmail will only be used if you have consented to this in writing.  It is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to be the steward of your unique 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.  Our office email address remains the same;  [info@focusmed.ca](mailto:info@focusmed.ca).

**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. There is after-hours access **every weekday from 5-8pm, and Saturday and Sundays.**  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.

   Preventative health care is a top priority in our office and the guidelines can be found [here](https://www.focusmed.ca/_files/ugd/4efe57_c2cdc98be56743569dfe87476ff4442f.pdf) on our website. To arrange for indicated screening tests please reach out to 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 without a visit, completion of forms, and medical notes (illness, massage, etc). As an alternative, we offer the [**ANNUAL FEE**](https://www.focusmed.ca/pay-a-bill)which encompasses the aforementioned charges for a 12-month period. Please click on the preceding link for additional information and payment options.

Prescription Renewals: **OHIP does not support prescription renewal requests without an appointment.** It is the **responsibility of the patient to request a renewal AT LEAST 2 weeks prior to running out of your medication.**  A charge will apply for prescription request renewals without a physician appointment, so please track your medication supply and plan appropriately.  If you change pharmacies, please let the office know so that we can update your file.

Wishing everyone a healthy season ahead.

Drs. Glazer, Herman, Leneman and Stulberg