



Dear Colleague,

We would like to update you on how The Children's Clinic is managing the situation during the current COVID-19 pandemic.

The Children's Clinic **remains open** during the Coronavirus-19 (COVID19) crisis and we plan to do so unless Government advice changes. We have taken several steps to ensure that we can continue to provide specialist paediatric services across all the specialities currently offered at the clinic.

As pressure mounts on public hospitals **we see it as an important role of The Children's Clinic to be able to provide outpatient care to children** who may otherwise need to have their appointments delayed for many months.

KEEPING PATIENTS AND STAFF SAFE

We have implemented the following measures to minimise risk of infection to patients, their families and our staff:

- Screening all patients for symptoms of fever, respiratory illness or travel by text and email prior to their appointment and on arrival.
- We have implemented social distancing in our waiting room and consult rooms, removed toys and books, and have hand sanitiser readily available.
- We have requested that only one parent/guardian attend with the child, that grandparents do not attend and that siblings do not attend appointments.
- Families may be asked to wait outside the building or in the car to reduce numbers in the waiting room. They are then called when the doctor is ready to see them. Where possible the doctor may contact the patient by phone to take a history and then invite them in for an examination or testing thus minimising the time spent in the clinic.

OPTIONS FOR APPOINTMENTS

Face to face

- **We are continuing face to face appointments** at The Children's Clinic (TCC) as normal, while complying with current health advice.
- We are of course monitoring the situation and will respond to changes in advice as they occur.
- While the usual fees do apply for face to face appointments we are sympathetic to the fact that many families will be suffering significant financial hardship and we are happy to discuss options regarding fees for those families.
- Currently oral food challenges are on hold until further notice.

Telehealth appointments

- We are also offering Telehealth appointments to both new and follow up patients in various circumstances
 - Families who live >15km from TCC and not in a major city would qualify under pre-existing criteria for a distance video telehealth appointment. Out of pocket costs may apply under this category.

- For families who prefer not to have a face to face consultation at the current time we will be offering both video and telephone Telehealth consults.
- The usual fees for consults will apply to Telehealth consults with patients entitled to appropriate rebates from Medicare.
- Again we are sympathetic to the fact that many families will be suffering significant financial hardship and we are happy to discuss options regarding fees for those families.
- In selected cases families who are suffering from significant financial hardship may be offered bulk billed Telehealth appointments.
- These appointments may be by video or telephone where a video link is not possible.
- For children with allergies being reviewed by Telehealth, we will schedule skin prick testing for a later date, if necessary, or perform blood tests instead and review the patient by Telehealth to discuss their results and develop a management plan.

Immunotherapy

- For patients on subcutaneous immunotherapy injections (SCIT) we are continuing to give these at the clinic, while complying with current safety advice.
- We have not experienced delays in getting product from overseas yet, but this is a possibility in the future, and we would recommend giving the clinic at least 10-12 weeks' notice for repeat orders just to be safe.
- We will not start new patients on SCIT at the moment, to minimise potential disruptions to therapy. If a child is due to start SCIT (order placed but first injection not given) we would strongly suggest delaying the start of treatment until the COVID pandemic has settled, most likely later in 2020.

Just a reminder of our contact details:

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We know these are unsettling times and hope you all stay safe.