

**PROCREATE Fertility Center of Virginia.  
COVID-19 Pandemic Protocol  
Patients and Staff Guidance  
April 24, 2020**

In anticipation of the resumption of the full spectrum of fertility care in the setting of the COVID-19 pandemic, Procreate Fertility Center will comply with both the ASRM and CDC Healthcare Risk Mitigation Recommendations. More specifically the following steps will be taken by Patients, Staff, and Providers to minimize risk of coronavirus transmission.

**All patients and anyone entering the facility must wear a face mask. Due to the medical supply shortage nationally our staff is wearing their own face masks. Patients are required to wear their own face masks. Procreate Fertility is unable to supply patients with face masks.**

**Staff and Providers**

PPE recommendations (See Table):

In addition to following standard CDC Risk Mitigation Guidelines and the Procreate Fertility Guidelines regarding staff testing and timing of return to work:

- All staff, not in close contact with patients (Admin, Front Desk, In person office visit etc):
  - Social distancing mask (cloth or clinical mask), maintain 6 feet of distancing when possible.
  - COVID test once a week when possible. (Procreate Fertility is performing COVID-19 PCR test through Fulgent Labs)
- Staff in close contact with patients or patient fluids (specimen handling – blood, semen, follicular fluid, blood draws, IV-line insertion, saline infusion ultrasounds – SIS, manual vacuum aspiration, endometrial biopsy) will use droplet precautions:
  - Surgical mask, eye protection or face shield, and gloves
- Staff performing Gyn or OB ultrasounds (not SIS), vital signs, Preoperative & postoperative areas, IUIs, embryo transfers:
  - Surgical mask, eye protection or face shield, and gloves
- Procedures requiring Anesthesia (egg retrievals):
  - COVID negative: surgical mask, face shield (eye protection), gloves
  - COVID positive: Ref out to ID. Not proceeding with testing or treatments until cleared.
  - COVID status unknown (test not resulted): consistent with PFC's PPE (gown, gloves, eye protection, N95)
    - Efforts to minimize personnel in room, no trainees
    - 1 hour between retrievals
    - Follow recommendations regarding cleaning/decontaminating all surfaces

Action Items:

- Stock appropriate PPE (surgical masks, N95, face shields and gowns)

### **Telephone Screening Guidelines (Before All In-Person Patient Appointments)**

- A standard portal (See Below) will be sent to all patients prior to all in-person appointments. The portal will address the following:
  - Visitors:
    - No visitors for monitoring appointments
    - Partner or 1 designated driver permitted for egg retrievals and embryos transfers (partner to stay in car until patient ready for discharge)
  - Importance of clinic notification if symptoms develop
  - Reminder to wear social distancing mask to all appointments
  - Reminder not to arrive before or after designated appointment time. If late, patients should call prior to arrival so they are re-assigned an appropriate appointment time to minimize the number of patients in the waiting room.
  - All patients starting any cycle (Femara, OI, IVF, FET, ERA) will be tested for COVID-19.
  - All patients coming to the center for fertility testing will be tested for COVID-19.
  - Patients planning egg retrieval will have COVID test once/week.
  - Men will be strongly encouraged to use home collection kits for semen (on site collection permitted when this is not feasible for patients).
- An email regarding purposeful conception during COVID19 Pandemic will be sent to all patients
  - See addendum below – to be sent by Portal or email to ALL patients  
“Getting Pregnant Using Fertility Services during the COVID-19 Pandemic”

#### Action Item:

- How to order COVID 19 PCR test? How to see the result?
- If a patient reports positive COVID symptoms, where do we send them?

### **Known SARS CoV-2 Positive Patients:**

- If positive COVID 19 PCR test, patients will be referred to Infection Diseases and the testing or treatments will be postponed until resolved.
- If during an IUI or FET a patient or partner becomes COVID positive: cycle will be cancelled. Can start next cycle after symptoms free x 2 weeks.
- If in the middle of a fresh IVF cycle a patient becomes COVID positive: complete retrieval, convert to freeze all, no transfer. Can start FET after symptom free X 2 weeks.
- If male partner is positive during the IVF cycle: We will strongly recommend cancellation. If we collectively opt to proceed, require home collection of semen. Male can drop off specimens directly to lab personnel at the back door (in PPE) and return to his car. He cannot attend procedure.
- If a female partner or household member becomes positive during treatment, strongly encourage the patient to consider delaying further treatment (or convert to freeze all) until after a 2-week quarantine period.

## **ASRM GUIDANCE published 4/24/2020**

### **Physical Distancing, Sanitizing Surfaces, and Frequent Handwashing**

Studies of the COVID-19 show different durations of viral activity on a variety of materials under laboratory conditions. How this translates into actual infectious risk in the real world is unknown. Practices should:

- Screen patients and every member of the staff daily, including physicians and other healthcare providers, who enter the facility. This may include such elements as questioning regarding possible risk of exposure and/or the presence of signs and symptoms of COVID-19, and checking body temperature, before the individual enters the facility.
- Maintain physical distancing between individuals as recommended by the US CDC.
- Implantation of our face mask policy for patients and staff. CDC recommends wearing a face mask when in public spaces as a protective measure against asymptomatic viral transmission.
- Implementation of a frequency protocol of wiping surfaced between patients every 2 hours and specific procedure for cleaning/decontaminating all surfaces touched by patients and staff during the ordinary course of operations.
- Post public notices or signs for patients and staff, regarding avoiding touching one's face, mouth and eyes.
- Require frequent hand washing with soap and water for 30 seconds (or cleansing with a sanitizing gel) as a critical component of COVID-19 risk mitigation.

### **Practice Pattern Considerations**

Altering practice patterns can help reduce disease transmission risk by minimizing the number of in-person interactions. The Procreate Fertility plans to:

- Continue to use telehealth to the greatest extent possible to minimize the number of patients in the office at one time.
- Minimize the number of in-cycle monitoring visits to the fewest necessary, as determined by medical feasibility.
- Counsel and consent patients electronically.
- Spread out necessary appointments to limit the number of patients in the office at one time.

## **Getting Pregnant Using Fertility Services during the COVID-19 Pandemic**

We know that many patients are curious about the implications of trying to conceive during the COVID19 Pandemic. We have provided some facts and resources below regarding fertility treatment and pregnancy in the setting of an ongoing COVID19 Pandemic.

- There is very limited data about coronaviruses and pregnancy.
  - The impact of pregnancy on susceptibility to or severity of COVID-19 remains unknown, but appears to be similar to that of non-pregnant women.
  - The impact of COVID-19 on pregnancy, including maternal and fetal risks, remains unknown. The same risks that are associated with any fever during pregnancy (e.g. miscarriage) due to any viral illness also exist for COVID19.
- Currently, there are many unknowns regarding access and accuracy of COVID-19 PCR and antibody testing.
- If a patient is found to be COVID-19 positive immediately before conception (IUI or embryo transfer), a freeze all or cancellation of the IUI or embryo transfer will be required by our clinic. This last-minute cancellation may be associated with financial costs, ie. prior expenses that will not be reimbursed. For patients that are found to be COVID-19 positive prior to an egg retrieval, we may continue with a planned egg retrieval as long as the patient is stable and does not have severe symptoms. The eggs or embryos will be frozen until complete recovery. Fertility treatment can then be started again after a patient is symptom free for 14 days.
- There remains a low but possible chance of future treatment cancellation due to exposure, infection, unavailability of PPE or other hospital resources, or changes in regulations and state/federal guidance.
- While we are maximizing compliance with CDC, ASRM and public health regulations by using appropriate PPE and sanitization techniques, minimizing in person visits, maximizing telehealth, and spacing out existing appointments, there remains a risk of exposure to the novel coronavirus by having contact with individuals at the clinic during treatment.
- Moving forward with treatment is optional. You may choose to postpone treatment.
- We are available and happy to answer any questions that you have on this topic. Please send a portal message to your physician if you have any questions or concerns regarding getting pregnant during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Your questions may require a telehealth appointment due to the nature of a discussion and the decision making process.

We know this is a stressful time and will continue to provide facts as they become available. The ACOG Pregnancy and COVID-19 Website is also an excellent resource:

<https://www.acog.org/patient-resources/faqs/pregnancy/coronavirus-pregnancy-and-breastfeeding>

**Patient Information for Treatment at  
PROCREATE Fertility Center during COVID-19 Pandemic**

Please keep in mind that all of these recommendations are in place to minimize the risk to you, your family, and to our team.

- **Visitors/Partners**
  - Visitors and partners are not permitted during visits. If you are unable to attend the visit on your own for any reason, please notify your physician so we may understand your situation and discuss accommodation.
  - For obstetric ultrasounds and IUIs: The use of FaceTime or equivalent is strongly encouraged when a family member, friend, or significant other would like to be included during an obstetric ultrasound or IUI.
  - For egg retrievals, patients may be accompanied by a partner or 1 designated driver who should remain in the patient's car for the duration of the visit.
  - For embryo transfers, visitors will not be permitted and are asked to wait in the car until the patient is ready for discharge.
- **Symptoms**: If you develop symptoms such as fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, headache, fatigue, chills, muscle pain, sudden loss of taste or smell, or are suspicious that you may have been exposed to someone with COVID-19, please contact our office.
- **Masks**: A social distancing mask (e.g. cloth sufficient) is *required* for all appointments.
- **Appointment spacing, appointment times**: Please do not arrive before or after your designated appointment time. We recommend arriving within 5 minutes of your scheduled time to minimize the number of people in the waiting room. If you are late, please call the clinic as you may be re-assigned a new appointment time. You are encouraged to wait inside your car in the parking space where it is easier to maintain 6 feet from other individuals until closer to your appointment time.
- **COVID-19 Testing Before Retrievals**: Patients planning an egg retrieval will have COVID-19 PCR testing performed as part of her testing. If the test is positive, the patient will be advised to cancel the cycle unless the retrieval is imminent. All resulting eggs or embryos will be frozen; if applicable, the embryo transfer will be delayed until the patient is symptom free for 14 days. Patients may assume added financial responsibility if this occurs.
- **Semen Analyses / Collections for IUI and egg retrievals**: All patients will be encouraged to use home collection kits for semen analyses and collections. These are available from the andrology team. The patient themselves must bring the specimen into the clinic (not partner) at their assigned appointment time and present a photo ID.

AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR REPRODUCTIVE MEDICINE (ASRM)  
PATIENT MANAGEMENT AND CLINICAL RECOMMENDATIONS  
DURING THE CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) PANDEMIC

<b>Risk assessment and mitigation for reproductive care procedures and activities</b>				
<b>Procedure/Activity</b>	<b>Potential Risk</b>	<b>Mask Type Required for Staff</b>	<b>Other PPE Required for Staff</b>	<b>PPE Required for Patients</b>
Clinic Entry Screening	Droplet	Medical Grade	Face Shield, Gloves	Cloth Mask
Patient Registration	Droplet	Cloth Mask	Face Shield	Cloth Mask
Vital Sign Measurement	Droplet	Medical Grade	Face Shield, Gloves	Cloth Mask
In Office Consultation	Droplet	Cloth Mask	Face Shield	Cloth Mask
Phlebotomy	Droplet, Splash, Needle Stick	Medical Grade	Face Shield, Gloves	Cloth Mask
Ultrasound	Droplet	Medical Grade	Face Shield, Gloves	Cloth Mask
Saline Infusion Sonogram	Droplet, Splash	Medical Grade	Face Shield, Gloves	Cloth Mask
Hysterosalpingogram	Droplet, Splash	Medical Grade	Face Shield, Gloves	Cloth Mask
Office Hysteroscopy	Droplet, Splash	Medical Grade	Face Shield, Gloves	Cloth Mask
Endometrial Biopsy	Droplet, Splash	Medical Grade	Face Shield, Gloves	Cloth Mask
Specimen Handling (Blood, Semen, Follicular Fluid)	Splash	Medical Grade	Face Shield, Gloves	N/A
Intrauterine Insemination	Droplet	Medical Grade	Face Shield, Gloves	Cloth Mask
Embryo Transfer	Droplet	Medical Grade	Face Shield, Gloves	Cloth Mask
Pre-Op Holding Area	Droplet	Medical Grade	Face Shield, Gloves	Cloth Mask
IV Line Insertion	Droplet, Splash, Needle Stick	Medical Grade	Face Shield, Gloves	Cloth Mask
Airway Management	Droplet, Aerosolization	N95 or Equivalent	Face Shield, Gloves	N/A
Oocyte Retrieval	Droplet, Splash, Needle Stick	Medical Grade	Face Shield, Gloves	N/A
Operative Hysteroscopy	Droplet, Splash, Needle Stick	Medical Grade	Face Shield, Gloves, Gown	N/A
Operative Laparoscopy	Droplet, Splash, Needle Stick	Medical Grade	Face Shield, Gloves, Gown	N/A
Open Reproductive Surgery	Droplet, Splash, Needle Stick	Medical Grade	Face Shield, Gloves, Gown	N/A
Post Anesthesia Care Unit	Droplet, Splash	Medical Grade	Face Shield, Gloves	Cloth Face Mask when able

Based on CDC guidance for the selection and use of PPE in Healthcare Settings

(<https://www.cdc.gov/hai/pdfs/ppe/ppeslides6-29-04.pdf>)