
Your Eye Appointment in the Post-COVID-19 Era

Due to the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) global pandemic, our office has implemented new policies and procedures for your visit. These policies and procedures are recommended by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the American Optometric Association (AOA), and the Massachusetts Society of Optometrists (MSO), and they are intended to ensure the safety and well-being of you, our staff, and the community. Though some of these policies and procedures may seem difficult and burdensome, we feel that they are necessary. If you have any questions about these policies and procedures, our staff will be happy to discuss them with you.

Before your visit

When you make your appointment, our staff will ask you questions to help them appropriately schedule your appointment. They will ask you about your exposure to COVID-19 and about any symptoms you are currently having. If you are at risk for having COVID-19, your appointment will be scheduled at least 14 days out to minimize risk.

Our staff will ask for demographic and insurance information. Please have your insurance card and numbers ready. They will ask you to text us a picture of both sides of your insurance card(s) if you are able to do so.

Our staff will also ask you to activate your Patient Portal. This is an important tool we will use to communicate with you before and after your visit. To activate your Patient Portal, we will need a valid email address from you. We may also use your email address to remind you of appointments and notify you when your glasses are ready, and rarely for important notifications from our office. But we will never forward your email address to others or use it for unwanted purposes. On the Patient Portal, you will be able to enter your health history, medications, pharmacy, and family history. The doctor will also be able to send you your exam summary and educational materials.

The day of your visit

On the day of your visit, you will go through some new procedures as well. We will use the Curbside Waiting Room concept and check you in as efficiently as we can. When you arrive at the office, please text us at 978-475-5252 from your car to let us know you are here. If you do not have texting capabilities, you can call the office. The receptionist will check you in over the phone. She will also ask the COVID-19 screening questions again to make sure you are not currently ill. If you are currently ill, she will ask to reschedule your appointment at least 14 days into the future.

The doctor will then call you while you are in your car to obtain your reason for visit and to review your medical history.

If you do not have a cell phone, have someone who has a phone come with you so that you can use their phone. If you still cannot come with a cell phone, you can come to the office for in-

person check-in. We try to avoid this because it may increase the risk of disease transmission, but we will do this if necessary.

After you finish checking in on the phone, you can enter the building. Before entering, please put on your face mask. If you do not have a face mask, one will be provided to you. Also, **please enter alone**. Anyone accompanying you will not be allowed into the office. Please leave children and other relatives at home. The only exceptions are (1) if the patient is a young child, one parent can accompany them, and (2) if the patient is elderly or disabled and requires physical assistance, one person can accompany them. Everyone entering the building, including those accompanying the patient, must wear a face mask while in the building. Anyone who refuses to wear a mask will be asked to find another office to continue their eyecare.

When you come to the front door, it will be locked. The receptionist will buzz you in. As soon as you enter the office, use hand sanitizer which will be available inside the front door. The receptionist will check your temperature with a forehead thermometer. If you have a fever (>100.4° F), your appointment will be scheduled 14 days into the future. The receptionist will guide you to the exam room or the optical desk.

Please go directly to the appropriate room or area. Please do not touch frames or other displays. If the doctor or optical staff are with other patients, please have a seat in the waiting area. To comply with social distancing guidelines, there will only be 2 chairs in the waiting area. Please maintain social distancing of at least 6 feet with any other person in the office.

At the end of your exam, the doctor may send educational materials to your Patient Portal. After you are done speaking with the doctor, you may proceed to the optical to pick out glasses.

When picking out glasses, please do not take the frames off of the displays yourself. The optical staff will do this for you. You are welcome to try on as many frames as you like, but because we are requiring appointments for optical services, your time with the optical staff will be a maximum of 30 minutes. If you require more time, we ask that you take pictures of yourself with the frames you are considering, then review them at home with your family. You can then call, text or email your final decision to us. The optical staff will also pre-adjust the frame you selected to decrease the need to adjust your frame when you pick it up.

If you do not wish to select glasses, you can proceed to reception to order contact lenses and/or to check out. We strongly recommend that contact lenses be directly shipped to your home. All annual supply orders will have free shipping, plus you will get volume pricing and a manufacturer's rebate that will save you money. Smaller orders will incur a small shipping fee.

Payment

We prefer that payments be made by contactless credit card or ApplePay/GooglePay. If you do not have one of these options, you can insert or swipe your credit card in the machine, but try

to minimize touching the machine itself. We will also accept checks or cash if you do not have a credit card.

After your visit

Following your visit, your exam summary and any educational materials that your doctor would like you to have will be uploaded to your patient portal. Make sure you keep the web address, your username and password handy. You can send a message to the doctor through the portal if you have any questions.

If you ordered glasses, we will contact you when they are ready, and you can arrange to pick them up in our silver drop box outside the building's rear door. If you would prefer to have your glasses adjusted when you pick them up, you will need to make an appointment to do so.

If you ordered contact lenses that were not shipped to you, contact us to arrange to pick them up in our silver drop box outside the building's rear door. You will not be able to walk into the office to pick up a contact lens order.

In summary, we value you and your health, and we are doing our best to ensure that our entire community is as safe as possible by implementing these protocols. We hope that these measures are only temporary, and we will do our best to make your visit as pleasant as possible. As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please call us at (978) 475-5252, or send us an email to admin@andoveroptometry.com.

We thank you for your patronage!

Best regards,

Dr. Ronald Watanabe, Dr. John Deshaies, Dr. Nadia Zalatimo, and the Staff at Andover Optometry on Central