To the Valued Customers of Asti’s South Hills Pharmacy,

Re: COVID-19

As with the rest of the world, we are closely following the developments of the global pandemic involving the virus, COVID-19 – the coronavirus.

We would like to share some important safety information, as well as some operational changes that we are making at the pharmacy in response to this situation.

**Your Safety is Our Top Priority**

We highly encourage you to read, understand, and implement the recommendations made by the CDC.  You can find this important information here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

Here are just a few highlights from this information:

1. The best defense against transmitting and contracting the virus is to **avoid exposure**.  **Avoid close contact with others** – especially if you are over the age of 50 and suffer from certain chronic conditions – or have a compromised immune system.  Vulnerable chronic conditions include:
	1. Diabetes
	2. Heart disease
	3. Lung disease
2. **Clean your hands often!**  You should avoid touching your mouth, eyes, or nose – and clean your hands after you blow your nose, cough, or sneeze.  The more vigilant you are in cleaning your hands, the less likely you will be to transmit the virus!
3. The CDC has made several other recommendations to help you protect yourself and others from the virus.  If you have any questions regarding this information – your Asti’s Pharmacist is readily available to address your questions or concerns.

Asti’s Pharmacy will be implementing several changes to the operation to assist in protecting our customers as well as our staff.

Effective immediately, we have instituted several policies and procedures to increase the prevalence and frequency of cleaning in the pharmacy above and beyond our standard, thorough cleaning procedures.  We are limiting the risks of internal transmission of the virus, and you can trust that every single staff member is doing their part in this initiative.

Beginning 3.16.20 through 3.30.20 there will be several changes to how you interact with us:

1. **We will be transitioning to curb-side pickup, delivery, or shipping only.**  We are limiting the number of individuals that come into the pharmacy in order to reduce the chance of virus transmission.
	1. **If you usually come to the pharmacy to pick-up medication:**
		1. You are still permitted to come to the pharmacy; however, we ask that you contact the pharmacy upon your arrival so that we can have a staff member bring your medication to your vehicle.  If you have a copay, we can take your payment information over the phone.  We will document your acknowledgement of the offer to counsel, as well as your receipt of medication on your behalf, so that we minimize contact with you.
		2. We ask for your patience in advance, as we expect that this process will add to the amount of time it takes for us to provide you with your medication.  The more notice you provide us, the more efficiently we will be able to serve you.
	2. **If you usually get your medication delivered:**
		1. We will still be providing delivery service; however, we are restricting our delivery drivers from entering your home or apartment complex.  If you reside in a residential complex, we kindly ask that you meet our delivery driver at the entrance of your building.
			1. As with the curb-side delivery, we will sign for your medications on your behalf, to minimize the contact between you and our drivers.  We will also stress the importance of paying for your medications in advance with a credit card over the phone.
		2. We may choose to send your medication to you via the USPS or FedEx depending on a variety of factors.  We expect our volume of deliveries to increase during these times, and in order for us to accommodate the increase in requests, we will need to rely on common carriers to get you your medication.  We will be doing our best to work ahead to ensure that these delivery methods get you your medication to you in a timely manner.
	3. **If you receive a service that requires a face-to-face interaction**, such as having a pharmacist administer an immunization or other injection:
		1. Normally these services are available to walk-in customers; however, we are now asking that you coordinate this visit in advance with one of our pharmacists.
2. **We will be altering our hours of operation**.  These changes will help us to accommodate modified staff schedules, as well as certain changes in our processes.
	1. **Weekday Hours**
		1. We expect to still have staff at the pharmacy during our normal hours of operation, 8a-8p; however, we are asking you – if possible – to contact the pharmacy between 9a-7p.  If you are currently enrolled in one of our proactive refill programs, such as Medication Synchronization or our Adherence Packaging Program – RxMap, you will not be impacted by this change, as we will be reaching out to you according to our normal schedule.
	2. **Weekend Hours**
		1. As with our weekday hours, we are looking to modify our weekend hours, which are normally: Saturday 9a-5p, Sunday 10a-3p.  We will be operating both Saturday and Sunday from 10a-3p.
3. **These changes may be extended past 3.30.20 – a decision will be dependent on how the situation unfolds.**

If you have any questions about these changes, please contact us as soon as possible.

**For those of you with questions or concerns about running out of medication:**  As with addressing the safety concerns for our patients and staff, we are equally as concerned with ensuring that we have adequate medication stock to meet the needs of our patients.  As of right now, we have been given no information indicating that pharmaceutical supply chains have been disrupted to the point of impacting medication supplies.  It’s well-known that the pharmaceutical industry relies heavily on countries outside of the United States to produce the raw, bulk chemicals used in drug manufacturing; however, the impact of the virus on these sources is still unclear.  Furthermore, pharmaceutical distributors and warehouses have reported upwards of 6 months of medication supplies on-hand.  As you can imagine, global leaders have to prioritize our global infrastructure for critical items such as food and medication – so you can rest assured that the pharmaceutical supply chain is receiving ample attention.

We are taking steps to increase our on-hand inventories to ensure that all of our patient’s medication needs can be met.  We will not be dispensing 90-day supplies of medications as these strategies only increase the risk of artificially creating drug shortages in the marketplace – with an increased risk for wasted medication.  We are confident that our strategy will ensure that all patients maintain access to their life-sustaining medications and get us through any potential supply chain disruptions.

If you have questions or concerns on this subject, please speak to one of our pharmacists to have your questions answered.  Due to an expected increase in phone calls to the pharmacy for a variety of reasons, we ask that in leu of calling the pharmacy to ask your questions – please email hello@astisrx.com and request that a pharmacist contact you directly.  In your email inquiry, please do not include your personal health information, rather – include your name, contact information, and a general explanation of your inquiry.  A pharmacist will contact you as soon as possible.

Again, we greatly appreciate your patience and understanding as we implement these changes to protect your health – as well as the health of our staff.

Sincerely,

The Executive Management Team

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