

Update: March 11, 2020

A Message from Kelsey-Seybold Clinic Medical Leadership:

Kelsey-Seybold's medical and executive leadership team is continuing to monitor the novel coronavirus situation and following guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Houston Health Alert Network (HAN). Our emergency preparedness committee is using the guidance provided by public health authorities to address staff training and education, personal protective equipment, communications, employee health and exposure, and more.

We are committed to the safety of our patients, caregivers, and employees and have put these measures in place:

1. Increased Virtual Health Services: We are offering E-visits from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m., Monday – Sunday to patients experiencing specific symptoms of COVID-19 (cough, fever, shortness of breath). E-visits currently offer a one-hour turnaround for medical advice and a care plan delivered by providers connected to the patient's individual, confidential medical record. E-visits are available through the [MyKelseyOnline](#) website, and downloadable MyChart/MyKelsey app ([App Store](#) or [Google Play](#)). **E-visits for COVID-19 symptoms are available to all current patients in all plans accepted by Kelsey-Seybold Clinic.**
2. Video Visits for COVID-19 Symptoms: Patients can also have a Video Visit with a Kelsey-Seybold provider for COVID-19 (cough, fever, shortness of breath) or other respiratory symptoms. Video Visits can be scheduled by calling 713-442-0000. A member of our Contact Center will schedule your primary care Video Visit. Video Visit Hours: Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. and Saturday – Sunday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. **Video Visits for COVID-19 symptoms are available to all current patients in all plans accepted by Kelsey-Seybold Clinic.**
3. Encouraging the Use of Virtual Health: Video Visits for other symptoms and conditions (non-COVID-19) are available to KelseyCare plan members and certain United Charter plan members. We encourage the use of virtual health, including both Video Visits and E-visits.
4. 24-Hour Clinical Triage by Phone: We are offering 24/7 patient access to Kelsey-Seybold nurses and providers via our 24/7 Contact Center by calling 713-442-0000 to screen for upper respiratory symptoms. Any patient with upper respiratory symptoms is currently triaged by phone by our dedicated team of nurses and providers to determine the appropriate level of care or testing needed.
5. Implementation of CDC Guidelines: We are following all CDC guidelines and protocols when a patient presents at a clinic with upper respiratory symptoms.
6. Disinfecting and Cleaning of Clinics: In keeping with the CDC's cleaning and disinfection guidelines we are using recommended cleaning products and have trained Clinical staff on the appropriate use of these products. We have also increased housekeeping rounds for sanitizing highly-touched areas.
7. Employee and Provider Travel: We are recommending to our providers and employees that they suspend or cancel any work-related travel. We have implemented self-reporting for all clinical and administrative personnel of any personal or work-related travel to our Environmental Health & Safety and HR departments.
8. Limitations to Patient Guest: We have limited patients to one guest when receiving care at our Ambulatory Surgery Centers and Infusion Centers.

[To learn more about COVID-19, go to Kelsey-Seybold.com/covid19.](https://kelsey-seybold.com/covid19)

Please see FAQs below:

Frequently Asked Questions

If you're experiencing COVID-19 symptoms (fever, cough, and shortness of breath) or other upper respiratory conditions, you have the option to conduct an E-visit with a Kelsey-Seybold Clinic provider. You'll receive medical advice and a care plan in one hour or less without having to leave home! Our providers can immediately screen for COVID-19 and, if needed, direct you to the appropriate level of care or provide a care plan, including sending prescriptions to the pharmacy of your choice.

What is coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)?

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus that was first identified during an investigation into an outbreak in Wuhan, China.

Have there been cases of COVID-19 in the U.S.?

Yes. The first case of COVID-19 in the United States was reported on January 21, 2020. The current count of cases of COVID-19 in the United States is available on [CDC's website](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases.html).

Have there been cases of COVID-19 in the Houston area?

Yes. The first case of COVID-19 in the Houston area was reported on March 5, 2020. The current count of cases of COVID-19 in the Houston area is available on the [Texas Department of Health website](https://www.texas.gov/covid-19).

How does COVID-19 spread?

The virus that causes COVID-19 probably emerged from an animal source but is now spreading from person to person. The virus is thought to spread mainly between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet) through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It also may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Patients with COVID-19 have had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of:

- fever
- cough
- shortness of breath

How can I help protect myself and others?

You can help protect yourself from respiratory illness with everyday preventive actions.

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.
- If you are sick, help prevent the spread of respiratory illness to others by staying home.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

Who is at most risk for contracting a severe case of coronavirus?

Anyone can contract COVID-19, but to date severe cases have mostly been limited to the elderly and those with existing chronic health conditions like heart disease, cancer, diabetes, and respiratory disease.

Is there a treatment?

There is no specific antiviral treatment for COVID-19. People with COVID-19 can seek medical care to help relieve symptoms.

Is masking an effective way to prevent getting coronavirus?

There is no evidence to support that masking is any more or less effective in preventing the spread of COVID-19 than it is for any other respiratory virus. You should only wear a mask if a healthcare professional recommends it. A facemask should be used by people who have COVID-19 and are showing symptoms. This is to protect others from the risk of getting infected. If you visit the doctor with a cough, you should request a mask to cover your nose and mouth.

Should I be preparing an emergency stockpile of food, water, and medicine?

While the overall risk for COVID-19 in the United States remains low, purchase of medications to help alleviate respiratory symptoms and liquids to help with hydration is a generally good practice — standard preparations normally taken during this time of year for the flu or other viruses is recommended.

What should I do about upcoming travel, both international and domestic?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is regularly updating travel recommendations as the COVID-19 circumstances evolve. Visit the [CDC's website](#) to receive the most up-to-date recommendations for travel.

What does Kelsey-Seybold recommend for people returning from countries of concern?

We recommend following CDC guidelines and best practices, which can be found on

the CDC COVID-19 website. A specific page is dedicated for travelers returning, or arriving, from areas with widespread, sustained (ongoing) transmission of COVID-19 and [may be found here](#).

Should I schedule an appointment with a Kelsey-Seybold physician if I believe I may have Coronavirus?

If you are concerned about symptoms you or a family member are experiencing, we ask that you call our 24/7 Contact Center at 713-442-0000 to speak to a medical professional who may advise you on next steps. At Kelsey-Seybold, we follow CDC guidelines for infection control and prevention. In the interest of public safety, we ask that patients who are demonstrating symptoms of COVID-19 (fever, cough, and shortness of breath) and have either traveled to an area with widespread and sustained transmission of the condition or have had known contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19 to contact us at 713-442-0000 for assistance.

How is Kelsey-Seybold preparing for potential coronavirus cases?

Kelsey-Seybold continues to monitor the novel coronavirus situation and follow guidance from the CDC and Houston Health Alert Network (HAN). Medical leadership for the clinic system has enacted an emergency preparedness committee to use the guidance provided by public health authorities to work through topics such as staff training and education, personal protective equipment, communications, employee health and exposures, and more.

What would lead Kelsey-Seybold Clinic to test a patient for COVID-19?

Kelsey-Seybold Clinic is following CDC guidelines for testing. If a person meets CDC criteria for symptoms and/or travel history, we will contact local health officials to arrange for COVID-19 testing.

Is Kelsey-Seybold Clinic testing for coronavirus?

No. Currently, only government agencies can order confirmatory testing.

How is Kelsey-Seybold Clinic protecting its employees from contracting coronavirus?

Kelsey-Seybold is following CDC guidelines for personal protective equipment and infection control that includes gowning, masking, and more. Our organization is continuously working to inform, train, and support our workforce so that our staff is prepared to safely and effectively help care for patients with COVID-19.