



**NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)  
UPDATE 3.16.2020  
RE: Schedule Changes and Closures**

**To Our Valued Patients,**

We sincerely apologize for the last minute change in plans, and hope you can appreciate that 1) this decision was not taken lightly and 2) this is a situation that continues to evolve by the minute and hour.

Late last night (Sunday evening 3.15), we received a message from the Monroe County Medical Society recommending clinics reschedule all nonessential appointments. In speaking with colleagues in the community (well past midnight), it sounds as though specialty clinics are being rescheduled across the Rochester healthcare systems. We understand this is an enormous inconvenience, but ultimately want to protect the community as we all try to limit the spread of the novel coronavirus COVID-19.

As a result, we have made the very difficult decision to reschedule the majority of (but not all) patients starting today (Monday), 3/16/2020. As of now, we anticipate a return to clinic 3/30/2020, sooner if recommended by the County.

**Our medical dermatology practice, The DermaSpa, Center for Aesthetics & Anti-Aging, and SkinSearch research division will be reaching out by phone to assist with rescheduling your appointment.**

This update is to help address some of the questions we have been hearing re: the current situation.

**Included in this update:**

- Our plan for 3.16.2020 through 3.30.2020
- Clinical & Phone Hours of Operation
- What is an Essential Appointment?
- Biologic and Immunosuppression Questions
- Office Cleanliness Measures
- Conclusions

**OUR PLAN Effective Monday 3.16.2020 thru 3.30.2020:**

- **ALL DermaSpa clients will be rescheduled**
- **ALL Center for Aesthetics & Anti-Aging clients will be rescheduled**
- **MANY (not all) Dermatology Associates of Rochester medical patients will be rescheduled (see details below under Essential v. Non-Essential - this will be by appointment only.)**
- **Skin Search will be seeing patients in a limited capacity** to insure that trial protocols are not deviated from, until notice otherwise is received from the FDA or Pharmaceutical Sponsor.

## **Dermatology Associates of Rochester & Skin Search CLINICAL & PHONE HOURS OF OPERATION:**

We will continue to see a very limited schedule of patients with essential medical needs, as outlined above. **We will be calling you if you are already on our schedule to help reschedule your appointment.** If you have what is considered an essential need for patient care, but wish to reschedule, we will help accommodate your request.

Until notified otherwise by the county or state, our medical practice and SkinSearch will remain open for essential patient encounters by appointment only (see below) on Tuesday and Thursday 9 am - 3 pm.

- Tuesday (3.17) 9 am - 3 pm
- Thursday (3.19) 9 am - 3 pm
- Tuesday (3.24) 9 am - 3 pm
- Thursday (3.26) 9 am - 3 pm

**TODAY (Monday, 3/16/20) our Call Center will remain open until 4 pm to assist with rescheduling your appointment.** Beginning tomorrow (3/17/20) phone hours for patients to call and be assisted will include the above times on Tuesday and Thursday; as well as Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 9 am to 1 pm.

**Scheduling inquiries and Medication refill requests** should ideally take place by email [info@DermRochester.com](mailto:info@DermRochester.com) or phone call to **585.272.0700**. We will handle these matters in as timely a fashion as possible.

On-Call Provider Phone Number **FOR URGENT PATIENT CARE MATTERS ONLY**. We will **not take medication refill requests or appointment reschedule requests** at this number - 585.750.4795

### **ESSENTIAL vs. NONESSENTIAL:**

The below list of appointments are presently classified as **essential**. This is open to the clinical judgment of a provider, if you have a clinical concern you feel is essential, we encourage you to call and speak with a provider. Please understand that our call volumes are very high and it may take us time to get back to you. You can email as well [info@DermRochester.com](mailto:info@DermRochester.com) and we will answer questions as quickly as possible.

### **ESSENTIAL APPOINTMENT CLASSES:**

- Diagnostic Biopsies (If you were scheduled to receive results of a recent biopsy)
- Suture Removals
- Melanoma and some Skin Cancer Surgeries
- Isotretinoin (counseling and review of blood work can be handled over the phone; patient can be advised we will call and should not be taken off the schedule)
- Painful Rashes new patients, never before seen please call to speak with a clinical team member
- Any other inquiries patients have re: essential v. nonessential will be reviewed by an MD or NP provider

All other appointments would be nonessential, however, if you have a specific concern, we will address it on a case-by-case basis. These essential appointments apply to existing patients; new patients not yet seen in the practice will unfortunately need to be rescheduled.

**Please note that at present we are NOT able to provide medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment recommendations by email or phone.** Any requests to do so will be scheduled for an appointment based on current essential vs. nonessential criteria and return to clinic dates outlined above.

## **BIOLOGIC AND IMMUNOSUPPRESSION QUESTIONS:**

Please note: We are NOT screening for coronavirus COVID-19; nor do we have the ability to order testing.

The following is a recommendation from the American Academy of Dermatology (AAD) for patients on biologics:

### **"Patients on biologics: Should I continue treatment?"**

With COVID-19 having the biggest impact on older patients and those with suppressed immune systems, you may wonder if continuing biologic treatment is a good idea. In a soon-to-be-published letter to the editor in *JAAD* evaluating this question, the authors concluded, "We do not know if biologic therapies render patients more susceptible to coronavirus, but we know that in a pre-coronavirus era, respiratory infection rates were comparable to placebo. Conversely, discontinuation of some biologics can result in loss of response when treatments are reintroduced or even result in the formation of antibodies to the discontinued biologic. All of these factors must be considered when advising patients about continuing or discontinuing biologic therapies."

If you are on an immunosuppressive, immune-modulatory or biologic therapy, it is strongly encouraged that you observe SOCIAL DISTANCING recommendations by the [CDC](#) as well as HAND HYGIENE and other BEST PRACTICES to minimize the risk of infection. Should you develop any symptoms of infection, you should at that time notify your provider for further instructions, which will likely include discontinuation of therapy as would be indicated for any infection. If you have contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19 or exposure to a person with COVID-19, please contact the provider on-call to discuss further recommendations.

## **OFFICE CLEANLINESS MEASURES:**

- At check-in, we will ask about your current state of health, recent travel outside of Rochester, and check your temperature (effective 3.17.2020)
- We will be limiting seating in the waiting room to maintain a distance of 6 feet in between patients
- We use medical/hospital grade cleaning products that have been demonstrated effective against the majority of infectious pathogens.
- Our standard process involves wiping down all surfaces, tables, and chairs in patient rooms at the beginning of the day, after every patient encounter, and at the end of the day.
- Our UPDATED process for COVID-19 will ALSO involve using medical/hospital grade cleaning materials and wiping down all surfaces and points of contact in our entire waiting room and office at least once an hour throughout the day and as needed/requested.
- Public Restrooms are available and we recommend good hand hygiene (washing with soap and water for 20 seconds).
- Hand Sanitizer will also be readily available in patient exam rooms and the waiting room.
- We apologize for the inconvenience, but we have removed frequently handled items from our waiting rooms, such as magazines, brochures, cups and business cards. Patients may request these items from the desk and they should be taken with the patient or disposed of after their departure.

## **CONCLUSIONS:**

We thank you so much for your understanding and patience as we seek to navigate these new county and medical society recommendations in real-time. We remain committed to you, our patients, and will provide updates to office-related and frequently asked questions as available.

Feel free to follow our [COVID-19 BLOG posts](#) for the most up-to-date information from the office.

If you have further questions, please do not hesitate to call us at (585.272.0700) or email us at [INFO@DermRochester.com](mailto:INFO@DermRochester.com)

Sincerely,

Dr Lesley Loss, MD (President/Owner Dermatology Associates of Rochester)  
Janice Loss, NP (President/Owner SkinSearch & DermaSpa)