



## COVID-19 October 2021 Update: South Coast Medical

### Patient Screening, Telehealth Appointments & Respiratory Consultation Room at Rye

South Coast Medical continues to service patients both with Face to Face consultations in our clinic or telehealth appointments. Patients are encouraged to utilise face to face appointments with their general practitioner to ensure comprehensive medical care.

All South Coast Medical clinics are actively responding to the risks associated with Covid19 so that we can both protect and support our staff and patients, while continuing to have our clinics operating so that we can provide ongoing services and vital patient care to the wider community each day. We know that stopping the spread of the virus is paramount, and whilst the pressure may have eased, we cannot become complacent. We have implemented policies across all of our clinics to ensure we minimise risk to anyone who enters our clinics.

***If you need to book an appointment with the South Coast Medical team please call the clinics or book online. Please do not attend the clinic to make an appointment in person.***

#### **What does this mean for South Coast Medical patients?**

- You can still attend face to face appointments to see our General Practitioners and Nurses for care. We encourage you not to neglect your health in this time
- Our Allied Health providers continue to provide face to face patient care
- Patients can still expect to be screened by staff when making phone appointments or following making an online booking. Patients will be screened for signs of respiratory symptoms (shortness of breath, coughing), cold/flu like symptoms (fatigue/muscle aches and fever), loss of taste/smell and contact with a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 patient.
- Any patient showing respiratory symptoms may be asked not to attend the clinic in person and to instead receive a phone or video consultation (telehealth). If the GP then feels a face to face consultation is warranted, we have introduced screening rooms at our Rye and Capel Sound clinics with separate entrance/exit to ensure no symptomatic patients are in our waiting rooms/consult rooms. Each respiratory room has it's own QR code for check in and is fully cleaned/sterilised after each attendance.
- Telehealth consultations are available with a number of our general practitioners for those that require them. Private fees may apply. South Coast Medical recommend face to face appointments where possible and you may be asked to attend for a

prescription appointment if it has been some time since your last face to face consultation with your practitioner.

**For patients with no respiratory symptoms, you can come into any of our clinics for a face to face consultations with your practitioner. On arrival please call reception to advise you have arrived. Please do not enter the clinic directly. You will then be called to enter the clinic when you are next in line to see your practitioner. This is to ensure we have minimal numbers of people in the waiting room. If you prefer to stay in your car until the time of your consult, you are welcome to do so.**

**To enter the clinics, you must ensure that you have a correctly placed face covering. If you have an exemption from wearing a face covering please call our clinic in advance and alternate arrangements will be made for your consultation so that you are not entering our waiting rooms. This is to ensure that all our patients feel safe and equal. We want to continue to provide all patients with the care required.**

- It is preferable to attend the clinic on your own. This is to keep the number of people in our clinics to a minimum. If you are unable to attend alone, please note that your carer/spouse/child attending the appointment with you may have their temperature taken on arrival and also have their details recorded for attendance purposes in line with the DHHS Covid contact tracing requirements.
- Clinic waiting rooms are spaced according to DHHS regulations.
- On arrival to the clinic the reception staff or nurse may request that your temperature be taken to ensure that you have not unknowingly got a fever.
- Patients can expect to see that our clinics have all been updated with non-fabric chairs (for ease of cleaning/disinfecting), with the quantity reduced to allow for spacing according to social distancing requirements.
- You will see signage at all of our clinics; prior to entry and inside the clinics to alert patients to symptoms of covid19 and how you can assist in stopping the spread
- Hand sanitiser is available for patient use in all reception areas and in our practitioner rooms
- All our reception areas have had protective screens installed to minimise contact with patients and to allow for social distancing. Our reception staff have all participated in Covid19 infection control training and all practitioners and staff are fully vaccinated.

- We no longer have magazines or children's toys available for use in our waiting rooms. Water fountains and coffee machines have also been removed from patient use. This is to minimise high sharing touch points.
- Our preferred method of payment is via credit or debit cards. Cash can be accepted if no other payment method is available.
- South Coast Medical staff continue to practice usual good hygiene and a high standard of infection control across all the clinics; regularly disinfecting high contact surfaces throughout the day.
- All our Doctors, Nurses, Allied Health and Reception staff will be wearing a face mask as outlined in the latest DHHS requirements. Our reception staff are in surgical masks and may also be in eye protection even though they are behind the protective screens. Our practitioners will all be wearing N95 masks and eye protection. If you are being seen in our respiratory room or attending a large vaccination clinic, the practitioners will greet you in full PPE.

Our priority is to be able to continue to allow patients access to a high quality of care, whilst ensuring the safety of patients and staff. We ask that our patients be considerate and respectful with our nurses and reception staff as they call to request information. We are pre-screening all patients with the intent of keeping everyone safe and minimising the risk of exposure to the virus.

### **I can't wear a mask can I still have an appointment?**

We understand that some patients have mask exemptions and are unable to wear a mask. SCM have GPs that will continue to see you in their room for a consultation without wearing a mask, however out of respect for all other patients and staff you may be asked to wait outside or in your car until the practitioner is ready to see you. Please ensure you advise reception at the time of booking that you have a mask exemption.

### **Can I get a covid vaccine exemption?**

There are a very small number of medical reasons to supply a time limited covid vaccine exemption. These are listed by ATAGI to coincide with the public health order of mandatory vaccination against covid19. We will not supply covid vaccine exemptions to new patients. Any queries surrounding covid vaccine exemptions can only be discussed on consultation with your regular practitioner.

### **Phone/Video Consultations (Telehealth)**

To ensure that South Coast can provide continuity of optimal patient care, patients that are symptomatic may be offered a phone consultation appointment with the GP at any of our

clinics. Phone consultations can be provided for a private fee which is payable at the time of your appointment and the Medicare rebate will be claimed for you at the time of payment.

### **Respiratory Screening Rooms located at Rye and Capel Sound**

Telehealth consultations cannot replace a face to face consultation with your practitioner in all circumstances. Whilst we continue to restrict symptomatic patients from entering our waiting rooms and GP consult rooms, we have introduced respiratory screening rooms with a separate entrance to a room positioned well away from the waiting room and from other staff and patients. The room is fitted out with fully wipeable materials, to enable complete disinfecting to take place after each patient has been seen. You will be greeted at a separate entrance way by one of our GPs in full PPE and asked to use the QR check in for the respiratory room. You can then receive a full consultation. Covid19 testing can also be performed if the symptoms warrant this.

If your GP feels that you would benefit from a face to face consultation this can be arranged at the earliest convenience.

We will continue to monitor and manage the situation each day and our General Practitioners continue to be available to provide patients with the most current medical advice. Should you have any queries or concerns please contact any of our clinics.

Thank you

South Coast Medical Directors

October 2021



## Reduce your risk of coronavirus (COVID-19) in the community

- ▶ **Wash your hands** often with soap and running water for at least 20 seconds. Dry with a paper towel or hand dryer.
- ▶ **Use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser** with over 60 per cent alcohol.
- ▶ **Cover your cough or sneeze** with a tissue or use your upper sleeve or elbow.
- ▶ **Stay at home** when you can. Check our website for reasons to leave home.
- ▶ **Wear a face covering** if you have to leave home.
- ▶ **Don't touch** your eyes, nose or mouth – or your face covering if you're wearing one.
- ▶ **Get help** if you feel unwell, call your GP or the coronavirus hotline for advice. If you're sick, stay home.
- ▶ **Get tested** if you have symptoms and go straight home afterwards.
- ▶ **Go to your medical check-ups** and see if medicines can be delivered to your home.
- ▶ **Continue healthy habits** exercise, eat a balanced diet, get plenty of sleep and stay connected. quit smoking (Quitline 137 848).
- ▶ **Remember your mental health** and do things you enjoy. Check our website for mental health resources and support.



**Find out more**

**[www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus](http://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus)**