

Wow we have come a long way in the past 15 months! After over a year of battling this incessant pandemic we now have a vaccine that works to prevent infection, epidemiology numbers that are headed in the right direction, and CDC approval to deescalate mitigation strategies in vaccinated individuals. This is all good news! There are still many challenges that exist, however, and the pandemic is not yet over. In our office we continue to diagnose COVID in several patients each week. And while our country is doing well, others are still struggling. We would like to take this opportunity to address some frequent questions and concerns that we have encountered.

- **I am vaccinated – do I still need to wear a mask when I come to your office?**

Yes we ask that you please continue to wear a mask in our office. The CDC still recommends that masks be worn in healthcare settings, and we choose to follow that guideline, so we will continue to require masks for anyone over 2 years of age.

**Should I get a COVID vaccine for my 12-18 year old?**

Yes! We recommend that your vaccine-eligible children get this vaccine. Even if you have already had COVID we recommend a vaccine, which can be given as soon as you are out of quarantine! We have no reservations about the safety of this vaccine and have gotten it for our own children. Unfortunately, we are currently not able to administer it in our office due to logistical issues with refrigeration, but there are many local sites with availability. We are investigating the possibility of giving the COVID vaccines here in our office in the future. We believe mass vaccination is the only way we will successfully conquer COVID, and get our children back in school fulltime without repeated quarantines.

- **What are the symptoms of COVID in kids?**

We have learned that these symptoms can be very subtle and may vary with age. We have seen kids test positive with just a runny nose, muscle aches, or headache. Some kids may have more traditional symptoms like a cough, fatigue, and sore throat. Most of our patients do not complain of altered taste/smell or difficulty breathing. The majority of our patients do not experience fever with COVID.

- **Does my child still need a COVID test when they have an exposure and/or symptoms of COVID?**

In most cases - yes. As above it is very hard for us to distinguish COVID from other common childhood illnesses without doing a test. However, if your child is fully vaccinated (2 weeks out from the 2<sup>nd</sup> vaccine) they do not need a test or quarantine with exposure as long as they remain symptom-free.

- **Can Covid 19 vaccine be given with other routine immunizations?**

Yes, vaccines can be given any time in relation to the COVID vaccine.