

Welcome from the Weill Cornell Department of Ophthalmology.

We are looking forward to providing you with superb eye care at your upcoming visit, whether you are a new or returning patient. Our outpatient clinics have been in continuous and safe operation throughout the current coronavirus pandemic, and we have treated many patients needing emergency visits or surgery for retinal detachment, advanced glaucoma, macular degeneration, and other vision-threatening urgent needs with newly designed procedures and practices for patient and staff safety. Fortunately, the situation in Manhattan is improving, and although definite precautions must still be taken to preserve this excellent safety record, we will be expanding our patient operations beginning Monday May 11th. We do this in conjunction with the expansion of outpatient activities in all of the specialties at Weill Cornell Medicine. Safety for all remains the highest goal, and to that end, we have done a “top-to-bottom” reworking of every part of the patient experience. This brief letter will provide information about 1) what will happen prior to your arrival, 2) what to expect when you arrive at our offices, and 3) the actual process of the visit itself. While some of the changes may seem unusual, we are fortunate in New York that new behaviors like mask wearing and social distancing have become well known. Our procedures for safety and efficiency are built around New York and CDC guidelines and supplemented by the powerful telemedicine platforms as well as our renowned patient care culture throughout Weill Cornell Medicine.

Prior to your visit

Our goal is to comprehensively prepare for your visit. This involves using our powerful online capabilities, and in particular Weill Cornell Connect. As always, we will need to work together, and you can expect the following:

- Once your appointment is set, we will ask that you register for Weill Cornell Connect and fill out your medical history electronically. Our team is available to assist you, as needed.
- We will review the information and pre-fill your electronic medical record. An eye care specialist may reach out to you by phone to clarify information.
- Your physician will review your chart prior to your arrival so that your in-person evaluation can be completed with utmost efficiency.
- On the day prior to your appointment, a team member will call you, confirm and review the plans for your appointment, assist you with electronic check-in and ask about any recent symptoms.

Arriving for your visit

For all in person visits, we have changed our procedures in order to minimize the number of people in any facility, the elevator traffic, and to eliminate waiting room congestion.

- Please arrive on time, and please come alone for your visit if at all possible. We are not able to allow entry to accompanying individuals, friends, or any non-patient except in the most necessary circumstances. Exceptions would include a parent bringing in a child (no other children, please) for an eye exam, or any individual with truly special needs for transportation help. Of course, other family members will be able to video or phone conference into the pertinent discussions if desired.



- All persons (including all patients, medical personnel, and staff) within any of our outpatient facilities must wear a mask. Please bring your mask or facial covering with you and have it in place covering your nose and mouth as you enter the practice location.
- On arrival, there will be a very brief entry screen to verify your appointment, to make sure you are not symptomatic, and to make sure you are wearing your mask properly. Additionally, your temperature will be taken.
- Elevators have been reconfigured for social distancing and are strictly limited in the number of occupants per car. Everyone will be asked to refrain from talking during the brief elevator ride.
- On arrival to the floors, social distancing and universal mask wearing will be strictly observed at all times including during a very brief check-in. After a temperature check, you will be quickly taken into an examination room.

During your exam

- For your safety and for that of the staff, the examination room doors will remain open during your exam to provide enhanced ventilation. We recognize that this is a change that may appear disturbing to some, but we assure you that confidentiality will be carefully preserved. Also, since the virus can be spread by talking, we will ask you to not speak while the physicians and staff are near your face. After the close-up portion of the exam is completed, there will be an opportunity to converse at a safer distance. If the need for discussion is relatively brief, then it may be completed at the visit itself. However, if a more detailed discussion is required, it will be recommended that this be conducted by telemedicine and prolonged face-to-face discussions will not be possible. Please understand that we are not at all wishing to limit your opportunity to obtain information in exchanges; rather, to simply minimize the amount of time spent face to face in conversation. Your provider will assist you in determining if the issues can be resolved with a shorter discussion or if additional post exam discussion is required.
- Perhaps the most welcome change for patients is that your visit will not only have an arrival time, but also an end time. This is being done to tightly control the number of patients in the facility at any given time. Please arrive on time for your visit, and please understand that we must end all visits in a timely fashion in order to avoid any crowding in the elevators or in the facility.

We look forward to welcoming to your visit to the Ophthalmology Department of Weill Cornell Medicine. All of our physicians and staff reaffirm our commitment to excellence in your care in a setting most carefully redesigned for safety.

Donald J. D'Amico, M.D.

The John Milton McLean Professor and Chairman

Weill Cornell Medicine

Ophthalmology