



WELLCOMEMD



The recent upswing of COVID-19 cases in North Carolina reached an unfortunate milestone on Wednesday when a 1,843 new cases of the disease were reported by the NCDDHS. It was the most cases reported in the state in a single day since the start of the pandemic.

In addition, the state's percentage of positive tests has remained elevated and the number of people hospitalized with COVID-19 is at 949 as of July 5, compared to 717 on June 5.

It's a reminder that COVID-19 has not gone anywhere and even though our community's numbers at one point started to decrease, we must continue to follow important health and safety guidelines to stop the spread of COVID-19.

We are committed to the health and safety of our patients and are here to answer any questions you have about COVID-19.

Can WellcomeMD Test Me for COVID-19?

We are fortunate to have the ability to test our patients for COVID-19 through a private lab. COVID-19 testing is performed curbside in your car to prevent the spread of virus and to protect our staff and other patients.

If you are experiencing symptoms related to COVID-19, such as cough, fever or shortness of breath or feel you may have been exposed to the virus, please contact our office immediately at (704) 444-0999.

What are the Symptoms of COVID-19?

There are [four unique phases of COVID-19 symptoms](#) once those symptoms begin to appear.

Phase 1: The virus begins to replicate in the upper respiratory tract and we begin to see **loss of smell, dry cough** and **hoarse voice**.

Phase 2: The virus moves to the lower respiratory system and we begin to see an **immune system response** to it.

Phase 3: Individuals with COVID-19 who see Phase 3 symptoms begin to experience **shortness of breath** and **pneumonia**. It's during Phase 3 symptoms that patients begin to require hospitalization.

Phase 4: The time to move into this critical phase of symptoms is approximately 10 days. During this time, individuals experience **acute respiratory distress**, the **cytokine storm** (chemicals released by white blood cells) and **multiple organ failure**.

Masks and Physical Distancing

On June 24, North Carolina began requiring the use of face coverings over your nose and mouth when in any indoor or outdoor public space.

"Covering your face and maintaining six feet of physical distancing when in public remain our best defense against the spread of this disease until a vaccine is found," WellcomeMD's Dr. John Woodward said. "This is still a novel virus and none of us

are immune to it. Masks and distancing not only help protect us from possible infection, but help keep us from potentially passing the virus to others."

In addition to the required face coverings, will remain in the "Safer at Home" Phase 2 of reopening for at least the next two weeks. Phase 2 could be extended depending on the trajectory of key-indicators, such as number of lab-confirmed cases, percent of positive tests and number of hospitalizations.

Our Office Will Remain Open

WellcomeMD's offices will remain open so we can continue to provide the highest quality of care to our patients during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to sick visits, patients have the option of having in-office visits for regular appointments. However, lab reviews will still be conducted virtually or by phone.

We will continue to be vigilant in following our enhanced guidelines for the safety of our patients and staff. This includes:

- No guests: If a family member or friend accompanies you to an appointment, they will need to remain in the vehicle.
- Please call ahead: When you arrive for your appointment, please call our front desk from your vehicle and a member of our medical team will welcome you at the door and guide you to your exam room.
- Please wear a mask: We require that all patients wear a mask when they enter the office.
- Screenings on arrival: Once you arrive for your appointment, in addition to being asked to wear a mask, you will also have your temperature checked and be screened for possible symptoms and exposure relating to COVID-19.

In addition, our medical staff will continue to follow the enhanced safety guidelines we have had in place since March, including but not limited to:

- Sanitizing the office and exam rooms after each patient, including wiping down door handles, exam beds and the front desk
- Wearing proper personal protective equipment
- Limiting the number of people in the office at one time
- Performing COVID-19 testing at curbside

If you have any questions relating to this policy, or need to schedule an appointment, please contact our office.

Don't risk your health. Phone us first.

While we've hit pause on many parts of our lives, your health needs haven't necessarily changed. An emergency event like a heart attack or a worrisome mole or lump should still be addressed, even during a pandemic.

The emergency room is still the place for you if you are experiencing critical medical problems. This includes major injuries, serious allergic reactions, animal bites, severe burns, poisoning, severe abdominal pain, coughing up blood and, of course, heart attack and stroke.

Any medical emergency is scary. And your stress may be elevated because of the pandemic. We at WellcomeMD are doing all we can to prevent unnecessary visits to the ER. However, in some circumstances it can't be avoided.

Please don't ignore potential emergencies. **If you are concerned or have questions about whether or not you should visit the ER, please reach out to us.**

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