

COVID 19 Protocol

Due to the impact of the COVID 19 virus, these are procedures and protocols implemented at Dr. Skeete and Associates, P.C. to ensure the safety of our staff and our patients. The protocol and procedures listed will follow the guidelines presented by the CDC, CMS, OSHA and the standards of care for the profession of optometry as dictated by the State Board of Optometry and recognized by the professional eye care organizations and eye care community. This list is subject to change as more knowledge of this unprecedented event becomes available and more information is presented. Likewise, we will update and modify our procedures accordingly. The ultimate goal is to promote the safety and health of our staff and our patients.

1. We will practice safety procedures at all times.
2. We will continue to follow the recommendations of social distancing as much as possible. Nevertheless, our field requires several elements of close contact. The procedures listed below will try to reduce the amount of that contact and utilize protective wear to minimize exposure.
3. We will ensure that the office is clean, hygienic, and well-maintained. Dr. Skeete & Associates, P.C. has always maintained a clean, hygienic environment. However, we will look to continually enhance these procedures. This will include but is not limited to: frequent hand washing with warm water and soap or alcohol-based hand rubs containing at least 60% alcohol; wiping down all surface with proper and approved disinfective products; using disinfectant sprays; and minimize patient contact with multiple surfaces and areas of the office. These procedure must be consistently done with and between every patient.
4. Our staff will be screened prior to the opening of the business day. This includes verbal confirmation of healthy well-being and temperature check. These pre-screening checks may be enhanced once testing becomes readily available. If anyone shows symptoms (which may include fever, coughing or shortness of breath), they will be required to stay at home or will be sent home. The return to office will be guided by the standards of care at that time dictated by the CDC.
5. The entire staff will be required to wear face masks and gloves at all times. Face shields will be used during our pre-testing exam when deemed necessary. Dress attire will be limited to wearing scrubs.
6. We will schedule two patients per hour or one patient every 30 minutes.
7. We will not accept walk-in patients until further notice. Any patient who wants to be seen must go through our patient screening process.
8. We must advise and reassure patients that we will follow all of the most recent guidelines by the CDC, CMS, OSHA, and state of Georgia, and State Board of Optometry. Likewise, we will keep up to date with those guidelines

9. In order to reassure the patients that we have a safety protocol in place, we must ask the patients to do their part in actively maintaining this as well. This starts with the patient screening. The pre-screening process includes the patient verifying that they do not have the COVID-19 virus or have been exposed to someone in the past 14 days of having the COVID-19 virus. This will be subject to CDC guidelines.
10. We will require that patients **must** wear a mask to their appointment. Due to limitations on the supply chain, we are not in a position to provide every patient a mask. When confirming the appointment, patients will be reminded that they must wear a mask to their appointment for the safety of the patient and the staff. Any patient coming in for a scheduled appointment without the appropriate PPE will be re-scheduled for another time.
11. Patients can download, print, and complete our pre-exam paperwork by visiting our website: www.georgiaoptometrist.com. The paperwork can be found on the Services page located under the Patient Forms section. The forms are in pdf format and can be downloaded from the site in that format, completed at home and brought in at time of scheduled exam. If the patient is unable to download the forms, the patient can complete the paper work either in the waiting area or in their car.
12. Any family members must remain in the car. We will only allow one parent if the patient is a minor; one translator for patients where English is a second language; or one helper if the patient is physically or mentally challenged. We will remove all chairs from the waiting except for two chairs.
13. Every effort must be made to confirm appointments, check insurance verification and even accept pre-payment over the phone to minimize in-office contact and time. Patient communication by phone will be longer so we ask both the patient and staff to be patient and prepared. However, the time spent will be very valuable for everyone.
14. As much information that we can get from the patient by phone will greatly reduce office time and exposure. Likewise, we recommend that patients bring in copies of their written Rx's or contact lens; take pictures of this information to bring with them or preferably, whenever possible, scan the information and send to us at: info@drskeeteandassoc@bellsouth.net . This can be added to the electronic chart before the exam encounter.
15. As part of our health check pre-screening, we will call to confirm patient appointments within 1 or 2 days of the scheduled appointment. Once again, at that call, the patient will have the opportunity to update their health status if there have been any changes in the medical health since the initial appointment was made.
16. Pre-screening of patients is very critical for everyone's safety. We will screen very careful to avoid high risk patients coming in to the office. These screening questions include current health, having recent symptoms associated with the COVID 19 virus and having contact or exposure with someone who has had the COVID 19 virus. Symptoms that may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus include:
 - Fever
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - Chills

- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell

As a public service, if the patient develops any of these findings for COVID-19, we will advise that they seek medical attention immediately if they have noticed:

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion or inability to arouse
- Bluish lips or face

17. An important part of our patient screening will require a non-contact temporal scanning thermometer check done at the beginning of patient pre-testing for the eye exam. Every patient must allow our team to administer a temperature check before being seen in our office.
18. Handling of the credit card machine, contact lens solution bottles, pens and clipboards will require thorough disinfection between patients. Hand sanitizer will be available. Used pens, clipboards, and items handled by patients will be put in bins for sterilization and kept separate from already sterilized items. These bins will be clearly labeled and separated.
19. Face masks and face shields will be worn during all pre-testing and engagement with patients
20. Pre-screening by the technicians will adjusted to separate data gathering from data entry and minimize transit in the office
21. To minimize exposure; enhance patient safety and promote complete ocular health, we will recommend the Optomap – digital retinal photography -- to every patient. There is a nominal fee of \$35.00 but will emphasize the importance of eye health and the effective way of allowing the doctor to assess this while maintaining social distancing
22. We will use both eye exam lanes rooms to allow enough time to sanitize exam rooms
23. Our patients will be directed to alert us by phone when they are coming for their appointment.
24. As always, food or beverages are not allowed in our office.
25. There is no access to a public restroom in our office
26. We have removed all magazines and any toys from our waiting room
27. We will have signs reminding our guidelines for social distancing. This includes removing all chairs in our waiting room except for two chairs. At present, the current metric is 6 feet. This may change but we will follow the prevailing guidelines
28. We will provide the appropriate documentation for our patients to review the HIPAA guidelines. However, we will ask that you allow verbal acceptance of these guidance in place of a signature confirmation. This will be documented in the electronic chart as: Due to the impact of COVID-19, the patient has given verbal consent of accepting the HIPAA guidelines in lieu of signature confirmation.

We have this written protocol in place for your review to assure you that the team at Dr. Skeete and Associates, P.C. is committed to safety and well-being. Our mission has always been to provide comprehensive and quality eye care to each and every patient. Our vision is to keep the good of the patient as the highest priority; to promote the importance of maintaining good eye health through annual eye examination and education; and to practice and live faithfully. Please stay safe and healthy.