



# DR. KARA FITZGERALD, LLC

## FUNCTIONAL MEDICINE

Kara Fitzgerald, ND IFMCP    Kenneth Litwin, MD FACP IFMCP    Stacey Cantor-Adkins, MD, MS, IFMCP  
Romilly Hodges, MS CNS CN    Lara Zakaria, RPh MSc CNS CN CDN

27 Glen Road, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Sandy Hook, Connecticut 06482

203-304-9502 fax 203-304-9503 frontdesk@drkarafitzgerald.com www.drkarafitzgerald.com

Dear Patients,

We hope this letter finds you and your family to be in excellent health during this COVID-19 pandemic. We've all been through a lot recently and are looking forward to being able to resume our usual activities and routines. Unfortunately, when that will occur is still a big unknown.

While many things have changed due to the pandemic, our commitment to being there for you is a constant. To continue providing care while keeping staff and patients safe, we moved our practice entirely to telemedicine. Fortunately, we were already well-versed in telemedicine, so this transition wasn't as difficult. While an in-person visit is often preferable, especially for an initial visit, it is clear that telemedicine is an extremely effective and convenient way to provide care that is here to stay.

Because some issues are best addressed with an in-office visit and some patients prefer an in-office visit, **we are prepared to re-open our office for in-person visits beginning June 1<sup>st</sup>.** We still advise that most visits occur via telemedicine, including initial visits. However, should you require or prefer to visit the office, please know we are following all necessary infection control and safety measures to ensure continued well-being for patients and staff.

We have made the following changes to our usual visit protocol to help protect patients and staff:

- **Our office will contact you the day before your in-office appointment.**
  - We will ask if you, anyone in your household, or anyone with whom you have had contact have been ill with symptoms such as fever, cough, **muscle pains, headache, sore throat or shortness of breath or have been diagnosed with COVID-19.**
  - If the answers to these questions suggest it is safer if you don't visit the office, we will convert the appointment to telemedicine or reschedule your appointment to a future date.
  - We would greatly appreciate it if you could inform us as soon as possible before your in-office visit if you believe that your appointment may need to be rescheduled due to how you are feeling or your contact with other people who have been ill. This will enable us to reschedule your appointment in a more efficient manner and to offer the opportunity to another client.
- When you arrive at our office on the day of your appointment, there will be remote check-in.** Instead of coming into the office and entering the waiting room, we ask that you remain in the safety of your car and that you call our office. At that time we will ask you again about how you are feeling. When the doctor is ready to see you and no other patients or guests are present in the waiting room, we will give you the go ahead to come up to our office.
- **Only one patient will be permitted to enter the office at a time.** Family members and other guests accompanying the patient will given a choice to join the patient in the doctor's office for the entire visit or to wait outside the building until the end of the visit. **Family members and guests will not be permitted to wait in the waiting room.**



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- **Patients, family, and other guests must follow proper safety procedures** at all times when in the office. Everyone is required to bring and wear your own masks and gloves. However, if you do not remember to bring with you or you do not have access to a mask and/or gloves these will be provided to you. You will be required to put these on before you can enter the office.
- **We will use a contactless thermometer to check patients,** family, and guests for fever before entering the office. Anyone with a fever will be asked to remain outside and the visit may need to be rescheduled as a telemedicine visit or for a future date.
- **Our office will be thoroughly cleaned after each patient visit** and our doctors and staff will practice infection control safety measures at all times, wearing gloves, masks, and when appropriate, face shields or goggles).
- **Hand sanitizer will be available** for you to use when in the office if you do not have your own.
- When your appointment with the doctor has finished, you will not visit the front desk. We will perform checkout and review any additional instructions for laboratory testing or follow up care remotely. Payments and invoices will be done in a contactless/remote manner. If testing kits are recommended by your physician these will either be mailed to you or given to you directly by your physician before you leave the office.
- Because we need to manage our schedule to allow for proper distancing between patients, you may be offered fewer options for scheduling your in-office appointment.
- **If you are having symptoms that may COVID-19** related or you know that you have COVID-19 and are having a difficult time recuperating, please contact our office during normal business hours to schedule a telemedicine appointment with a physician. We may be able to offer you valuable advice about what you can do to feel better and recover more quickly. If symptoms are severe or life-threatening, please call your primary care provider, hospital or 911 immediately.

Your safety is our top priority. We have made these changes to the usual protocol so that your visit to us is as safe and easy as possible. Despite all of the measures that we have enacted, we recognize that you may still prefer to schedule your appointment as a telemedicine visit. We are more than happy to do so.

If you are a patient who hasn't been to the office in one year, we normally require an in-person visit to continue working with our physicians. However, due to current circumstances, **we are not requiring this annual visit to be in-person.** We will gladly schedule this yearly follow-up as a telemedicine visit.

We look forward to seeing you again whether it be in-person or virtually. We're happy to answer any questions about the steps we are taking to keep you and our staff safe.

Please check our [website](#) for more information on what we are doing to help keep you safe and healthy.

Take good care,

Dr. KF and team