



PHONE SCRIPTING FOR CLINIC STAFF

Updated 5/1/2020

When a worried and confused patient calls the office with concerns about having COVID-19, the below scripting can be used to help de-escalate the patient's anxious state. The patient may request testing, believe they have the virus or that they need testing, even though it may not be recommended for them.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

NOTE: During your phone call with the patient it is important **ask open-ended questions**, particularly when gathering information to gauge their symptoms, risk factors and need for testing.

A **leading question** prompts or encourages the desired answer. An **open-ended question** cannot be answered with a "yes" or "no" and prompts the patient to self-assess and discuss their concerns freely.

- **Leading Question:**
 - "Do you have fever and shortness of breath?"
- **Open-ended Question:**
 - "Are you currently having any symptoms."

The goal is to calm and reassure the patient while appropriately assessing the need for testing.

SCRIPT

- **Remind the Patient:** "I want to understand what you are experiencing and how we can help you best."
- **Ask the Patient:** "What symptoms are you currently experiencing?"

STOP TALKING AND LISTEN

- **If the symptoms are related to COVID-19**

“Ok, thank you” then proceed to the next question.

Symptoms Include:

- *Fever*
- *Cough*
- *Shortness of Breath*
- *Chills*
- *Muscle pain*
- *New loss of taste or smell*
- *Vomiting or diarrhea*
- *Sore throat*

- **If the symptoms are NOT related to COVID-19**

“Let me schedule a (virtual) appointment so we can help you and still reduce your risk of exposure to COVID-19”

- **If the patient has no symptoms but is ≥ 65 or has a chronic condition below,**

“Because you are in a higher risk category, let me schedule a virtual visit for you.”

The following health conditions can qualify as being “high-risk”:

- Diabetes
- Heart Disease
- Receiving Immunosuppressive medications
- Chronic lung disease (Asthma, COPD, etc.)
- Chronic kidney disease

- **To Explain Testing:**

- *“It is important to schedule a virtual appointment with your provider so the correct testing is ordered. We now have the ability to do antibody testing.”*

- *“If testing is needed, you will be given further instruction for our drive-up testing sites that allow you to remain in your car to limit exposure, after your virtual visit.”*