



What Patients Should Know About Seeking Eye Care at HEA During COVID-19 Pandemic

Dear Houston Eye Associates Patients:

Houston Eye Associates (HEA) physicians, optometrists, and staff have been committed to providing the best eye care to our patients for 50 years. Our dedication to patients has been reinforced during this challenging time of COVID-19 pandemic. HEA enhanced patient safety practices to assure your protection regardless of the services you receive. We are excited to let you know that many of our physicians and staff have been vaccinated or are in the process of being vaccinated against COVID-19.

Following Governor Abbott announcement of ending mask mandates and leaving the decision of mask requirements to people and businesses to follow safety protocols, HEA has determined to continue to adhere to CDC, CMS, and Texas Medical Association guidelines as it relates to wearing a mask and social distancing protocols. **We will continue to recommend masks to be worn by employees, patients, vendors, and guests in our facilities as we find them to be in the best interest of our patients and the community HEA serves.**

Below are some recommendations to help guide you as you consider seeking care at HEA and what should you expect when you come.

Do Not Postpone Necessary Care. Some patients have been delaying care for decreased vision or other eye issues. Do NOT postpone necessary care, or it may lead to complications that may require surgical intervention or lead to loss of vision.

Do NOT postpone necessary preventive care such as diabetes screening or glaucoma follow-up exams.

Is It Safe to Go to Your Doctor? If you are still hesitant, call us to talk with our staff about our clinics and the precautions we follow. We have established special procedures for cleaning and disinfecting, rearranged waiting rooms, our physicians and staff wear masks and other personal protective equipment when indicated. We have easily accessible hand washing areas and available hand sanitizers.

Consider Telehealth or Virtual Visits. HEA patients may receive certain care by "telehealth" – audio or audio/visual care via your phone or computer. Call us to discuss if telehealth is a good option for you.

What to Expect When You Visit HEA? To prevent you from getting Covid-19, or giving it to others, you will be asked to do the following:

Wear a face covering. Everyone over the age of two should wear a face covering (facemask).

Limit visitors or people who go to your appointment with you. By limiting the number of people in the buildings we can practice better social distancing. If you need assistance coming to your visit, try to limit people who accompany you to ONE person.

Screening before entering a facility. You and visitors will have to go through a temperature check and be asked to complete a safety questionnaire. This is to keep you and others safe.

Avoid crowded waiting areas. Waiting rooms have chairs spaced apart to keep you and others safe. Sometimes you will be asked to wait in your car until your doctor is ready to see you.

Wash your hands often. Use soap and water for 20 seconds, or use available hand sanitizer when washing your hands is not possible. You can bring your own hand sanitizer if it makes you feel more comfortable.

Should you get tested or vaccinated before seeking care?

We encourage you to get vaccinated as the vaccine becomes available to you, but you do not require to be vaccinated or tested before entering our facilities. Before certain surgeries, it may be necessary to be tested. Your physician will let you know this is necessary.

HEA patients should have confidence in seeking care, and trust that HEA providers are doing their best to keep you, your family, and our community safe and healthy.

Thank you,

Houston Eye Associates Physicians and Staff