



# Panhandle Health District

*Healthy People in Healthy Communities*

**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

**Panhandle Health District**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **How to Safely go to Medical Appointments**

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**Panhandle Health District**

*This is a series about COVID-19 preparation and regional updates. Check the Press daily for new information, tips, and ways our health care professionals are working to keep our community safe.*

We all know that we're supposed to stay home, especially if we're not feeling well. But what about getting to important medical appointments like prenatal check-ups or cardiac services?

When you need to go to your doctor's office for non-emergency medical needs here a few steps we ask that you take. First, call your provider. Many providers are offering telehealth services that can be done over the phone or video call. If you need to be seen, your provider will have instructions on how to best protect yourself and others when coming in for an appointment.

Panhandle Health District (PHD) is offering telehealth appointments to all of our current and any new patients at all of our locations. We are still taking appointments to see patients in our clinics. During this pandemic, patients need necessary prescriptions and care. In order to protect patients and staff, we ask anyone who is feeling ill to wait in their car, call our clinic, and we will assess the person over the phone. When you enter PHD, we will perform a quick temperature check. Our waiting area has been adjusted to ensure patients are not closer than 6 feet to each other, we are sanitizing patient areas routinely, and we are limiting the handling of paperwork by multiple people.

The U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs posted their recommendations for veterans seeking care at VA hospitals and other health care providers on the website Military.com. It's good advice for the community at large as well:

- **Request prescription refills.** Ask your doctor to authorize a refill over the phone or through the office's internet portal, if it has one, and have it sent electronically to your pharmacy.
- **Reschedule a routine appointment.** If it is not urgent, call your doctor and ask to reschedule the appointment to a later date.
- **Inquire about an online appointment.** More and more medical practices are using [telehealth](#), including online chat and live videoconferencing tools to connect with patients. These

technologies are secure and private, and they meet all privacy law compliance requirements. Ask if your doctor can meet with you remotely.

At Kootenai Urgent Care patients are encouraged to schedule their appointments online ahead of time. Kootenai Urgent Care will also be implementing “car waiting.” Patients who arrive will wait in special parking areas until a room is ready for their exam, eliminating the use of the waiting room. When you arrive, call the number listed on signage to let the front desk know you are there. To help keep our community safe, Kootenai Urgent Care will be limiting visitors. Adults who can come alone should. Pediatric patients or adults who require assistance will be allowed one adult chaperone or escort.

The following companies support and/or offer telehealth to their clients. This list is not exhaustive, so if your insurance provider is not listed, please be sure to check with your primary care physician.

Regence: [www.regence.com/member/home](http://www.regence.com/member/home)

Kaiser Permanente: [healthy.kaiserpermanente.org/washington](http://healthy.kaiserpermanente.org/washington)

Blue Cross of Idaho: <https://bcidaho.com/telehealth/>

Medicare: Medicare Part B covers telehealth, [www.medicare.gov/medicare-coronavirus#500](http://www.medicare.gov/medicare-coronavirus#500)

Aetna: [www.aetna.com/.../member-rights-res.../covid19/telemedicine.html](http://www.aetna.com/.../member-rights-res.../covid19/telemedicine.html)

Kootenai Clinic: [appointmentcenter.kh.org/](http://appointmentcenter.kh.org/) or contact your provider’s office

Heritage Health: [myheritagehealth.org/contact/](http://myheritagehealth.org/contact/)

Panhandle Health: [panhandlehealthdistrict.org/](http://panhandlehealthdistrict.org/)

**As a reminder, it is important to stay home when you are feeling sick as much as possible unless you have to go to an essential medical appointment. If your symptoms worsen and you develop [emergency warning signs for COVID-19](#), call 911 immediately and notify the operator that you have or think you may have COVID-19.**

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**Panhandle Health District** provides over 40 different public health programs to families, individuals and organizations in northern Idaho. From food and drinking water safety to health education and disease control, public health services are critical to ensure our community is a safe and healthy place to live, work and play.

The PHD team is made up of nurses, nutritionists, environmental health specialists, health educators and many other dedicated professionals with a common goal to deliver vital public health services.

Panhandle Health District is one of seven health districts in the state of Idaho.

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