

Canary Hearing COVID-19 Update (July 2020)

Dear Friends,

In the middle of May when Governor Hogan proposed guidance for healthcare offices to re-open for elective procedures, we began seeing patients again in our office. Melissa, Maureen, and I are one hundred percent committed to maintaining a safe and welcoming space for the people we serve. As such, many of our office procedures have changed. Even though I miss the hand-shaking and seeing your smiling faces (now hidden behind masks), it has been an absolute pleasure to be able to visit with you and talk with you in person again. We have only been able to see many of you in the form of our new “curbside” service plan. However, that will change in the coming months as I will outline below. Those of you who have needed to come in for an office visit will have already experienced a new way of “doing business”. I want to take this opportunity to share how we intend to provide great personal care in a safe and welcoming environment in the era of COVID-19.

Given all the uncertainty surrounding this pandemic, I have decided to take the approach that our current situation is the new normal. I will be as pleased as anyone when/if this new viral threat is behind us, but for now, we are modifying our business practices in a way that will be sustainable long-term. Here are the new policies that will allow us to continue providing the superior service you expect in a safe and responsible manner:

- Only one person will be scheduled in our office at a time and time will be scheduled between patients as a buffer. This is intended to maximize social distancing. It also gives our staff the opportunity to clean and disinfect the office between appointments. These precautions mean that we will not be able to see as many people in the office each week, so please bear with us if it takes a little longer to schedule an appointment. If you have an emergency or an issue that needs to be addressed quickly, I will be able to meet those needs as described below.
- “Curbside service” will be an ongoing feature of our new business model. The only way I can provide regular care for all of my patients in this new environment is to continue our practice of curbside service. This means you will be able to drive to our office and we will come out to your car to talk with you and take your hearing aids. They will be brought into the office, cleaned and maintained, and then returned to you. We have been doing “curbside service” from the very beginning of the pandemic as a way to provide emergency care during the lockdown. All of our regular check-up visits will be conducted this way, as well as any unexpected service needs. I do recognize that “curbside service” has its limitations and in-person consultations, ear checks, and adjustments are necessary for long term success. Therefore, if you feel there is an issue that needs to be addressed in a more comprehensive way, please ask to make an in-office appointment.
- Please wear a mask when you come to see us. By now, we all know about masks. My staff and I will be wearing masks as per CDC guidelines, and we ask that you do as well. If you do not have a mask or forget yours, we will be happy to provide you with one.

- When you come in for an office visit I will be checking your temperature with an infrared forehead thermometer. This is a quick and easy way to screen for possible viral infection.
- Please stay home and reschedule your appointment if you have any symptoms of a respiratory infection, which may include: Fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion, runny nose, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.

Apart from these new policies, please know that behind-the-scenes we are taking extra precautions to ensure our office space is as safe as possible for all of us. Infection control has always been an important part of my professional life, but in light of the current pandemic, we are taking cleaning and hygiene to the next level.

I hope this message clears up any questions you may have had about our office practices during these historic times. Despite the inconveniences associated with our new normal, my whole staff is excited about being able to see you again and provide the kind of personal care you expect. We will be in touch when it is time for your next visit. If you need anything in the meantime, please don't hesitate to call 410-224-4327.

Warm regards,
Mike Canary