

7th of April 2020

CAIRNS
OBSTETRICS &
GYNAECOLGY
DR. NATALIE KIESEY-CALDING

Dear valued patient of Cairns Obstetrics and Gynaecology (COG),
I am writing to you today as we find ourselves in an impending health crisis with COVID19. In view of this uncertainty, coupled with our need to still care for your health, all gynaecology services will be modified to **maximise safety**.

This has immediately involved the following steps at COG:

- NO patients or staff are permitted into COG if at risk for COVID-19 as per government guidelines
- ALL patients and staff are screened for COVID-19 at COG entry via a series of questions
- NO hand shaking or physical greetings are allowed at COG
- ALL surfaces are wiped down regularly during the day and hand sanitiser available.
- NO holding of babies or toddlers at COG by the COG staff and **children should only attend if there is no other practical solution for their care.**
- ONLY one *essential* support person permitted to attend appointments and to be present at the hospital in the case of urgent operations.
- Gynaecology appointments will now be kept to an *absolute* essential only
 - Some appointments with Dr. Natalie will be able to be converted to SKYPE Telehealth consultations
 - Telehealth appointments will be charged at the same rate as if you had attended at the rooms less 10%, payable in advance of your appointment.
 - You will either be encouraged to reschedule/defer your appointment or schedule a Telehealth appointment. However, if truly “urgent” and needing an examination, a face-to-face consultation will be offered.
 - Patients over 70 years young will be particularly encouraged to stay at home and consult via Telehealth and avoid coming to the rooms.
 - All elective operating has been postponed indefinitely by the government – category 1 cases and urgent category 2 cases will still be able to be done. Categorisation is done by Dr. Natalie and as per government guidelines.
- **ALL face to face appointments will be kept to a minimum amount of time** (the COVID 19 data shows this reduces transmission risk)
 - *This saddens us greatly as we recognise that this is discordant to how we usually like to support our patients. In view of COVID-19 we must put safety first and attempt to minimise the direct contact time you have with the clinic*

IF we find ourselves in the unfortunate scenario of a positive COVID-19 case at COG, COG will be closed for a minimum of 14 days.

In the emergency situation that Dr Natalie is quarantined, **cover will be arranged on an ad hoc basis via the other private and public gynaecologists.**

This is an unprecedented time in healthcare and in our community. Our healthcare practices are not at all as we hoped, but we must put safety first.

Thank you for your kind understanding with these changes.