Clinical Practice Protocols

As of March 17, 2020, the CDC advises **postponing all routine eye care visits.**
1. What constitutes essential, urgent care? This requires the doctor's professional judgement. But some possible examples might be...
    a. Sight threatening acute ocular conditions
    b. Urgent need for spectacle or contact lens replacement in a first responder or critical care health worker.
    c. Follow up care for a previously diagnosed acute sight threatening illness.
    d. Customary follow up for ocular surgery/procedures
    e. Acute eye pain
2. What precautions should I take when examining a patient for urgent eye conditions?
    a. These are the precautions that should be used, as suggested by the American Academy of Ophthalmology. The precautions vary based on the patients level of risk for COVID19
    b. They include guidance for triaging eye patients.
    c. They include recommendations for disinfecting equipment including tonometers. Other approved disinfectants are included here.
    d. Protection for mouth, nose and eyes is recommended when seeing potential COVID19 patients; includes face shield on microscope and doctor or patient not speaker while at the slit lamp.
    e. If proper personal protective equipment (PPE) is unavailable, a referral to an appropriately supplied clinic or hospital can be considered. At this time though, there is no designated referral center for COVID19 positive patients with acute eye conditions. Any available PPE should be reserved for our frontline medical personnel. Communicate with the doctors you usually refer to, as to their policies. This situation reinforces the fact that **we may need to be available for urgent care,** to free up our emergency departments.
    f. Conjunctivitis in COVID19 as of 3/4/2020
3. How should I examine a patient remotely?
    a. Use telehealth options approved by Medicare and many private insurers. See AOA website to view latest webinar on this subject.
    b. Patient must initiate contact. Webinar contains specific guidelines including billing and coding information.
    c. Technology that may be used during telehealth encounter (i.e. Skype, Zoom, or Face Time via Smart Phone).

AOA Resources on Clinical Practices