

How do you handle isolating sick patients from well patients?

- 1) We have separate waiting rooms. However keeping people separate is another issue.
- 2) During flu season we reserve three rooms and direct sick patients directly to the rooms without waiting in the reception room.
- 3) We have carved out a "well visit" day on Thursdays. We train all our OBs and moms to schedule Thursday appointments unless they are sick. We schedule a few diabetic or hypertension visits as well, but for the most part it's well moms-to-be and newborns and vaccinations. This works very well for family care, and patients really appreciate it unless they are sick and can't get in because it's Thursday. I also have a very large shared waiting area, so it's easy to avoid people who look like they are dying.
- 4) Don't really separate; sometimes if concerned about communicable disease, i.e. patient calls says they have chickenpox, will have them come in back door and avoid the waiting room altogether. If patient has a cough the receptionist gives them a mask to wear.
- 5) We have several methods:
 - a) There are signs up at all of our facilities that advise persons who may be running a fever or who have a rash or a cough to use the phone outside the clinic on the wall (like a lobby phone) to call the triage nurse so that they can be directed around the lobby. This assures patients are seen faster as well if they have a fever. Patients self-isolate.
 - b) We have rash rooms built onto the backs of all of our facilities. This is a simple but great little invention as it enables persons who are ill to bypass the lobby and proceed straight to the treatment room. The entrance and door is separate to this room and again a phone or intercom allows patients to notify the nurse.
 - c) Nurse on call keeps a mobile phone on her at all times and this can assure patients who are ill can always get through. This helps patients divert around the lobby.
 - d) Many of our facilities were built with ingress and egress routes pre-established and we have MOUs with the Oklahoma State Health Department to be a MIPS site or POD in the event of a mass casualty event in a county in which we are located. We can mass immunize or treat thousands of patients an hour in our system if need be.
 - e) Most of our facilities keep an area of the lobby designated for those who are not "feeling well." This area is cleaned more often. Masks, gel, and signage direct patients to cover the cough and practice hand decontamination.