

Patient Education

COVID-19 and Outpatient Procedures

You must carefully read the "Consumer Information Use and Disclaimer" below in order to understand and correctly use

About this topic

Coronavirus disease 2019 is also known as COVID-19. It is caused by a virus called SARS-associated coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2). Doctors and hospitals have delayed many surgeries or procedures that were not an emergency. This was done for a few reasons.

- Staff must use masks, gowns, and gloves for many procedures or surgeries. These items were all in short supply and staff needed them to care for patients with COVID-19.
- Patients could have COVID-19 and not know it. Then the patient could expose staff and other patients.
- Staff from all parts of a hospital cared for the many people who were sick with COVID-19. This meant they were not able to do their normal jobs.
- Some people who were very sick with COVID-19 needed a breathing machine to help them breathe. Doctors used the breathing machines from the operating rooms to help people with COVID-19.

General

The staff feel it is safer now for you to have your procedure or surgery. They are able to care for you more safely than before. The staff will ask if you have had a COVID-19 vaccine or been around others with COVID-19.

As you prepare for your surgery or procedure please remember to:

- Get a test for COVID-19 if your doctor orders one.
- Keep any appointments to prepare for surgery, either telehealth or in person.
- If you are not fully vaccinated for COVID-19, you may need to:
 - Self-quarantine until your surgery date. This means stay away from others as much as you can. This limits your chances for exposure to COVID-19.
 - Stay in a separate room and use a separate bathroom, if you can. Have a family member or friend bring your groceries, drugs, or other items.
 - Wear a cloth face cover if you have to be around others. Practice social distancing and stay at least 6 feet (1.8 meters) away from others.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after you cough or sneeze. Use alcohol-based hand sanitizers with at least 60 percent alcohol if soap and water are not available. Rub your hands with the sanitizer for at least 20 seconds.
- Check for symptoms and call your doctor if you have a fever over 100.4°F (38°C) or higher, chills, cough.
- Be flexible. The date for your surgery or procedure may need to change. The main thing is to make sure you are safe and the hospital is able to care for you safely.

The day of surgery or your procedure things may also be different. You may:

- Have your temperature taken when you first get there. You may also be asked questions about vaccinations or any symptoms. This screening helps the staff know you are healthy and can have your surgery or procedure.
- Be given a mask to wear. You may also see staff wearing masks, not just in the operating room.
- Have to come alone or with a very limited number of people. Be sure to bring the phone number for your contact person.
- Be asked to use technology like a phone or computer to stay in touch with your family and friends.
- Have your surgery or procedure some other date if you are sick or test positive for COVID-19.

After your surgery or procedure, you may:

- Expect that staff will stay in touch with your contact person. This may be in person, through a phone call, or other means.
- Go home or stay in the hospital, based on what was done.
- Be taught how to care for yourself at home. If needed, staff will review this with your contact person as well.
- Have telehealth visits, in person doctor visits, or both.

Last Reviewed Date

2021-06-02

Consumer Information Use and Disclaimer:

This information is not specific medical advice and does not replace information you receive from your health care provider. This is only a brief summary of general information. It does NOT include all information about conditions, illnesses, injuries, tests, procedures, treatments, therapies, discharge instructions or life-style choices that may apply to you. You must talk with your health care provider for complete information about your health and treatment options. This information should not be used to decide whether or not to accept your health care provider's advice, instructions or recommendations. Only your health care provider has the knowledge and training to provide advice that is right for you.

Last Updated 6/8/21



© 2021 UpToDate, Inc. and its affiliates and/or licensors. All rights reserved.