IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

Overview

The safety of our patients and staff remains our highest priority. We are closely monitoring and proactively responding to the developments in Australia associated with coronavirus (COVID-19), in conjunction with both the Australian Government authorities and local public health units.

We are completely committed to providing our consumers with high quality, effective services and treatment in a safe and comfortable environment. We have implemented strict infection control and prevention protocols to protect our patients, health care workers and visitors to minimise the risk of any infection, including COVID-19.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss the precautionary measures in place at our hospital, please do not hesitate to contact us directly.

Information for patients and visitors

To help keep our community safe, please follow the COVID-19 safety rules that apply on the day of your surgery. Minimum requirements involve:

- *QR Code check-in*

  We have introduced a screening process to protect the safety and wellbeing of our visitors, patients, employees, doctors and contractors. This system requires an individual to scan a unique QR code using the camera function on their smart phone before they enter the hospital. You will then be required to select our hospital and complete the COVID-19 questionnaire.

  A completed copy showing a green tick must be shown to hospital staff upon entering. Failure to comply with this requirement means you will not be permitted to enter the hospital.

- *Sanitisation*

  There are sanitisation stations located in the hospital foyer as you enter the building and right in front of the day surgery entrance. Please make sure you practise good hand hygiene and sanitise your hands upon entry.

- *Face mask*

  All patients, visitors, staff and VMOs will be provided with Level 1 (L1) masks for general hospital areas. Please follow the guidelines for correct fitting, use and disposal during your time at the hospital.

- *Social distancing*

  It is important to practise social distancing to stop the spread of infectious diseases, such as COVID-19. The more space between you and others, the harder it is for the virus to spread. Please observe the floor markings when entering the hospital and you should always aim to remain 1.5 metres apart.

- *Temperature scan*

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Hospital staff may take your temperature before allowing entry into the hospital. This will depend on the level of COVID-19 cases and transmission in Victoria and advice from the Health Department.

The day prior to your surgery, the hospital staff will phone you directly to ask COVID-19 screening questions and re-confirm your suitability for elective surgery. Please advise the staff if you are feeling unwell.

Patient escorts and carers will be discouraged from remaining at the facility after the patient's admission. The escort/carer will be notified when the patient is ready for discharge. Where possible, only one escort/carer should attend the facility with the patient.

Pre-operative COVID-19 Testing and Isolation

All patients undergoing elective surgery must be tested for COVID-19 prior to their admission in line with Department of Health guidelines. This also applies to parents/carers accompanying a patient. This is an important precaution to ensure your safety during your admission.

Further information about our pre-operative COVID-19 testing protocol is outlined below.

What type of test do I need?

Patients (and where applicable carers) must have either a Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) or PCR test prior to their surgery.

It is the patient's responsibility to source a RAT from a local provider, such as a pharmacy or local testing site. Patients undertaking a RAT should do so one day prior to surgery, and then isolate until their admission.

Patients who are unable to source a RAT can have a PCR test at a local testing site within 48 hours prior to surgery and then must isolate until their admission.

Compliance with isolation rules is imperative to avoid cancellation of their surgery. We advise against using public transport, taxis or Ubers during the isolation period. If patients have no alternative transport options, please wear a mask.

How do I provide my results to MSPH?

On arrival for their surgery, patients must show the Patient Services team a photo of their negative RAT, along with their Medicare card and the date the RAT was completed or show an SMS with their PCR test result.

Patients who present for surgery without a negative test result will require pre-surgery assessment by the clinical team and this may include cancellation of their surgery.

What do I do if I have recently tested positive for COVID-19 or if I receive a positive result?

Patients who have tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 30 days will not need to undergo pre-operative testing. The Patient Services team will contact the patients the day before their surgery to

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discuss their theatre time and preparation for surgery. They will also conduct a COVID-19 screening checklist. During this checklist, patients must advise the staff of their recent infection.

If a patient or their carer tests positive on a RAT or PCR, they must contact MSPH on 8545 8000 immediately to coordinate the appropriate response.

We understand that the pandemic continues to be a challenging time for everyone, and we appreciate your patience throughout this process.

FAQs

What is this virus?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that cause respiratory infections. These can range from the common cold to more serious diseases. COVID-19 is a disease caused by a new form of coronavirus. It is called 'novel' because it is new. It was first reported in December 2019 in Wuhan City in China. Other coronaviruses include Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS). Coronaviruses can make humans and animals sick.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms of COVID-19 can range from mild illness to pneumonia. Some people will recover easily, and others may get very sick very quickly. People with coronavirus may experience symptoms such as:

- fever
- respiratory symptoms
    - coughing
    - sore throat
    - shortness of breath

Other symptoms can include runny nose, acute blocked nose (congestion), headache, muscle or joint pains, nausea, diarrhoea, vomiting, loss of sense of smell, altered sense of taste, loss of appetite and fatigue.

To stop the spread of COVID-19 people with even mild symptoms of respiratory infection should get tested.

How is the coronavirus spread?

The coronavirus is most likely to spread from person to person through:

- close contact with an infectious person (including in the 48 hours before they had symptoms)
- contact with droplets from an infected person's cough or sneeze

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- touching objects or surfaces (like doorknobs or tables) that have droplets from an infected person, and then touching your mouth or face.

How can I help prevent the spread of COVID-19?

To help slow the spread of COVID-19, practise good hygiene and physical distancing and follow the rules as directed by the health authorities. Some of these include:

Good hygiene:

- washing your hands often with soap and water before and after eating as well as after attending the toilet
- coughing and sneezing into your elbow
- cleaning your home or workplace

Physical distancing means staying 1.5 metres away from other people wherever possible and avoiding contact with others (including touching, kissing, hugging, and other intimate contact).

Masks – wearing a mask can help protect you and those around you if you are in an area with community transmission, and physical distancing is not possible.

If you are asked to wear a surgical face mask, after putting it on to cover your nose and mouth, do not touch the front of the mask and remove it using the ear loops or head straps.

COVID testing – if you feel unwell and have even mild symptoms, get tested for COVID-19 and follow the rules for isolation.

What does isolate in your home mean?

People who are recommended to be isolated should not attend public places, in particular work, school, childcare or university. Only people who usually live in the household should be in the home. Do not allow visitors into the home. There is no need to wear masks in the home. Where possible, get others such as friends or family, who are not required to be isolated to get food or other necessities for you. If you must leave the home, such as to seek medical care, wear a surgical mask if you have one.