FAQ

- Elective Surgeries
- Procedures
- Diagnostic Testing
**Essential Surgical and Invasive Procedures**  
**General - Frequently Asked Questions**

**Why is the hospital increasing the number of essential surgeries while we are still in a pandemic?**  
Many surgical procedures were either cancelled or delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, we are seeing an increase in patients who have an immediate need for a surgical procedure and face deteriorating health if the procedure is further delayed. At the same time, we currently have adequate capacity within our hospital and feel confident that we can safely care for additional patients who need an essential procedure.

**What precautions is the hospital taking to ensure patients having a procedure are not exposed to the COVID-19 virus?**  
The safety of our patients and caregivers is our No. 1 priority. That’s why we have implemented a strict, multi-layer process to ensure the safety of patients receiving care within our hospital:

- **No visitor policy** (with exceptions for end-of-life, minors, NICU parents and maternity patients)
- **Screenings:**
  - All caregivers are encouraged to self-screen before coming to work. If they are symptomatic, they must call their supervisor and stay home.
  - Everyone entering the hospital (caregivers, doctors, visitors, **everyone**) is being screened for fever. Anyone with a fever will be sent home.
  - If anyone develops symptoms while at work, they will alert their supervisor, contact caregiver health and go home under self-quarantine.
- **Isolating COVID-19 positive patients to one area of the hospital.** This keeps the rest of the hospital safe.
- **Implementing measures that ensure we meet social distancing directives.**
- **Universal masking** – all caregivers wear appropriate hospital-issued masks while in the patient care setting.

**Some news reports state that we have not yet hit the surge of COVID-19 cases. If this is true, will the hospital have capacity to support an increase in COVID-19 cases if they begin conducting surgical cases?**
Yes. Our hospitals on average are running at less than 50% of normal capacity. In addition, we have developed a surge plan that potentially increases our capacity. We will also be monitoring our personal protective equipment (PPE) inventory levels and pharmaceutical agents daily. Should we see a significant shift in any of these areas, we will immediately adjust scheduled procedures.

**Will all types of surgical procedures be performed?**
A surgical review committee will conduct daily reviews of all requested and scheduled procedures. Cases will be scheduled based on tiered criteria established by the ministry’s clinical leaders.

**The state’s stay-at-home mandate is still in effect. Doesn’t scheduling procedures conflict with this?**
No. We need to care for patients with COVID-19, as well as those who need immediate/urgent care. Our goal is to provide care in a safe environment. This means adhering to strict safety protocols, a no visitor policy and social distancing guidelines.
Where should patients be dropped off when arriving at the hospital?
Patients scheduled for surgery should be dropped at the following entrances:
- Santa Rosa Memorial – main entrance
- Petaluma Valley Hospital – ED entrance
- Queen of the Valley – main entrance
- St. Joseph Hospital – main entrance
- Redwood Memorial – main entrance

Patients should come prepared with the name and number of the person/designated driver who will be picking them up after procedure. The hospital will contact the designated driver at the time the patient is ready for discharge. Patients will be picked up at the same location they were dropped off.

Can a patient bring a visitor to the hospital?
No. We will continue to follow our current no visitor policy (with exceptions for end-of-life, minors, NICU parents and maternity patients).

Will patients be tested for COVID-19 before a procedure is scheduled?
Yes. All patients scheduled for an invasive procedure will be required to have a COVID-19 test as part of their pre-operative work-up. **NOTE:** Some selective simple, local anesthesia procedures may not be tested.

Will patients be screened for COVID-19 symptoms when entering the hospital?
Yes. Patients will be screened for COVID-19 symptoms when coming into the hospital, even if their COVID-19 test was negative as part of their pre-operative work-up. If a patient has any positive symptoms, they will be given a mask and escorted to a designated area. Patients screening positive upon entry will be rescheduled unless care is deemed emergent by their physician.

If a patient is allowed a visitor based on exceptions noted, will the patient’s visitor (designated driver) be screened for COVID-19?
Yes. The visitor will be screened for COVID-19 symptoms before entering the hospital. If the visitor has symptoms, the visitor will not be allowed to enter.

Will patients be given a surgical mask when entering the hospital?
Yes. Patients scheduled for surgery will be provided a surgical mask.

If a patient is allowed a visitor based on exceptions noted, will visitor (designated driver) be given a surgical mask when entering the hospital?
No. Visitors will not be given a surgical mask. As recommended by the county, visitors should be wearing a cloth mask (at minimum) when entering the hospital.

For those exceptions to the visitor policy, where will visitors (designated drivers) wait while the patient is in surgery?
Visitors will be escorted to a designated waiting area that complies with social distancing requirements.

Where should patients be picked up after surgery?
Once the patient is discharged, the patient will be picked up at the same location they were dropped off at the hospital.