

# FAQs: Jefferson Health's Response to COVID-19

Jefferson Health remains ready to provide safe, high-quality, compassionate and effective care to our patients, residents and communities. This includes providing emergency, non-emergent and time-sensitive care, in consideration of state and federal guidelines.

Our infection control practices have been very effective. Despite being the busiest health system in the region, only about 1% of our healthcare professionals who have cared for thousands of COVID-19 patients, have tested positive for the virus. And less than one-tenth of 1% have been hospitalized. During the height of this pandemic, when we were treating hundreds of COVID-19 patients during that month, we also discharged nearly 7,000 non-COVID-19 patients. We have no documented case of any of those patients acquiring COVID-19 within our facilities.

---

## What precautions are we taking at our facilities?

Jefferson Health has put the following additional safety precautions in place in light of the novel coronavirus pandemic to help ensure your safety:

- We have temporarily reduced the number of entrances to our facilities to better protect the health and safety of all.
- Patients in all care settings are being asked about symptoms and history as part of our screening process and many patients are being tested for coronavirus prior to their admission to the hospital.
- Non-emergency patients who plan to visit our facilities are screened by phone to determine ahead of time if they have been exposed to or have symptoms of coronavirus. For those thought to be at risk, we can arrange for testing and alternative care options arranged outside the hospital whenever possible.
- All patients are required to wear a mask when they enter our facilities and they must wear it at all times.
- We are putting in place social distancing guidelines, especially in public areas like our lobbies, food service areas and elevators.
- Our healthcare professionals are permitted to come to work only if they are healthy and fully equipped with proper Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). The PPE, such as gowns, masks and gloves help to protect you and our staff. This equipment is monitored and maintained based on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and state Department of Health guidelines.
- Our healthcare professionals wear this PPE in all settings and may wear additional PPE on hospital units when appropriate.
- In addition to our normal cleanliness standards, enhanced environmental cleaning and CDC-approved disinfection procedures for coronavirus are being consistently followed.

### **Is there still a PPE shortage?**

Currently, Jefferson Health facilities have sufficient PPE. However, our entire country continues to be challenged with acquiring appropriate levels of PPE that are critical to health systems safely providing care. As a result, we will only perform care in a safe environment and scheduling of procedures will be heavily dependent on PPE availability. If we experience a PPE shortage in the future, we will need to reschedule or cancel procedures.

### **What types of procedures can be rescheduled?**

Physician and facility readiness to resume time-sensitive procedures and surgeries will vary by geographic location based on state and federal guidelines. Please contact your physician's office for information regarding how and when to schedule your surgery or procedure.

### **How soon can I reschedule?**

The timing for rescheduling your procedure may vary based on location and a number of factors. In rescheduling procedures, Jefferson Health is taking into account state and federal guidelines, including those from the CDC and state health departments. This also includes executive orders from state governors in Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

If your scheduled procedure was postponed, we will call you to reschedule your appointment. Please also feel free to contact your physician office to inquire about available dates and times for rescheduling.

### **Will I have to repeat my pre-admission testing?**

Once you are rescheduled, your physician's office will contact you to discuss your individualized care plan and reorder any pre-admission testing that is required prior to the scheduled appointment/service. You may also be contacted by our Pre-Admission Testing (PAT) Center with further information.

### **Who will reschedule my appointments?**

In coordination with your provider, your appointment will be rescheduled directly through your provider's practice or the JEFF NOW® scheduling team.

### **Will I need to be tested for coronavirus prior to my procedure or appointment?**

Yes, you are required to be tested at least 48 hours prior to your procedure or surgery. In addition, you will be advised to self-quarantine after testing and prior to the day of your procedure or surgery. For appointments in a physician office, it may not be required that you are tested; the office staff will contact you with the appropriate process prior to your arrival.

### **What if I test positive?**

Patients tested for coronavirus prior to surgery must be negative to continue with surgery unless the surgery is considered an emergency as defined by relevant Department of Health Guidelines. If you test positive prior to your procedure or surgery, it will be postponed.

### **What do I need to do to prepare for my appointment/procedure?**

On the day of your procedure, you can expect to see the following safety precautions:

- Upon arriving at the facility, you will be provided a mask that you will be required to wear throughout your visit.
- We have visitor restrictions in place, and you will not be able to have anyone accompany you to our facilities unless you require assistance. If you do, you may have one adult companion with you to provide direct patient assistance. No children are allowed in our facilities at this time. Families are being asked to wait away from the facility while you undergo your procedure and return at time of your discharge.
- Social distancing will be observed in all patient care areas. Patients will be physically spaced in waiting areas and barriers, such as curtains, will be used when needed.

### **My procedure has not been rescheduled yet. Why is that?**

Always adhering to guidelines set by the CDC and other local and state agencies, we have an unwavering commitment to safety and keeping the well-being of our patients, residents, associates and communities as our highest priority.

As soon as we are able, Jefferson Health will selectively expand clinical care within our facilities – including elective and time-sensitive procedures – based on patient needs, clinical criteria and physician recommendations. Jefferson Health is considering all state and federal guidelines, including those from the CDC and state health departments, as well as executive orders from state governors, in making these operational decisions.

If you have questions about your procedure, or if there has been any change in your clinical condition, please contact your provider's office directly for an update on your case.

### **Can you guarantee that there will not be any patients with coronavirus in the surgical areas?**

Jefferson Health will not permit any patient to undergo an elective surgery without being tested for coronavirus within 48 hours prior to their surgery and receiving a negative result. However, in limited cases, it is possible a patient can receive a false negative test result or can contract coronavirus in the community after testing. To guard against these limited potentials, Jefferson continues to take multiple precautions to protect against the spread of the virus.

### **Can you guarantee that I will not contract coronavirus from having a procedure?**

No. While we take extensive precautions that are intended to prevent you from contracting the virus, we are in the midst of a global pandemic, so risk of contracting the virus exists generally. While Jefferson Health has made great efforts to reduce the risk of virus transmission to its patients, your treatment will involve you traveling away from your home and coming into contact with multiple people, just as you do when you enter any public location. Additionally, your post-surgical care may involve treatment by other providers at locations that are not owned or controlled by Jefferson Health.

### **What happens if I contract coronavirus around the time I have my procedure?**

A subsequent positive coronavirus diagnosis could result in unanticipated complications that require the need for additional medical treatment, and coronavirus positive status could increase procedural risks, including death. Because it is so new, the global medical community is still learning about coronavirus and there remains a good deal of uncertainty about the risks associated with this disease.