

## FAQs for Stanford Medicine Resuming Surgical Procedures

### Why is Stanford Medicine restarting surgical procedures now?

- On April 19, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) issued recommendations to re-open facilities for non-urgent non-COVID-19 health care. The next day, California Gov. Gavin Newsom also announced plans to allow hospitals and health systems to resume essential surgical care for Californians.
- Stanford Medicine's top priority is providing the safest, highest quality care to our patients. Many of our patients have waited weeks for surgeries that, while safe to delay at the time, would not be safe to delay indefinitely as they could have negative health impacts.

### Which surgical procedures are you starting?

- Throughout the pandemic, we have provided surgical care to the most urgent, high-acuity cases only. With necessary safety measures in place, we'll now resume all surgical procedures at our hospitals and ambulatory sites, except cosmetic procedures.

### Have you changed your visitor policy?

- We will continue our revised visitation policy to reduce community exposure to health care workers and patients. No visitors are allowed at SHC and SHC – ValleyCare (with some limited exceptions); one visitor is allowed at Stanford Children's Health. We will continue to monitor the disease in the community and continually assess the policy.

### How are you keeping your health care workers and patients safe?

- To ensure the highest standards of safety for our patients and health care workers, we are following a set of careful guidelines. These include:
  - Screening and testing patients for COVID-19 as appropriate in advance of admission, procedure, or entry into the hospital
  - Masking of patients and health care workers in clinical environments
  - Utilizing telehealth, virtual check-ins, and remote monitoring, where possible
  - Factoring in the safety of the post-discharge site when determining whether to schedule a procedure, in order to minimize risk of COVID-19 infection and optimize recovery
  - Co-locating COVID-19 patients within our hospital to increase safety
    - We are fortunate that we have been able to quickly activate space across each of our hospitals as dedicated COVID-19 units
  - Continuing our revised visitation policy to reduce community exposure to health care workers and patients.
    - No visitors are allowed at Stanford Health Care and Stanford Health Care – ValleyCare (with some limited exceptions); one visitor is allowed at Stanford Children's Health
  - Increasing and monitoring COVID-19 nasal swab and serology testing of our health care workers
  - Continuing symptom-screening health care workers upon entry to the facility, per county and CMS guidelines
  - Maintaining robust supplies of PPE and ensuring appropriate usage

- Monitoring the disease in the community on a daily basis and changing our plans as conditions change

#### **What if a patient tests positive for COVID-19 during the pre-procedure screening?**

- The physician and care team will work with the patient to determine the care plan, considering factors such as the urgency of the procedure and the potential impact COVID-19 might have on recovery.
- If it is decided that a surgery should be delayed, the patient will be given home quarantine and symptom-monitoring instructions and will need to be retested for COVID-19 prior to proceeding with surgery.
- If it is decided that a surgery should continue, our care teams will proceed with the utmost caution, including using enhanced personal protective equipment and patient isolation, to prevent the spread of COVID-19. The teams will also follow county reporting requirements.

#### **What about patients who need to go to an emergency department?**

- Across the country/world, we're seeing families making difficult choices about when to seek emergency care. Nationally, emergency visits are down significantly due to understandable fear among the public. However, delaying necessary care increases the chance that patients will report to emergency departments at a later stage of illness.
- Our emergency departments and urgent care centers are ready and fully functional.
- We're making sure that our health care workers and our patients are safe.
- We are rapidly testing our own workforce. So far, we've had very few health care workers test positive within our health system.
- We have instituted enhanced infection control procedures in the emergency department and across our health system:
  - Using PPE judiciously – with the goal of keeping our patients and health care workers safe
  - Ramping up sterilization and cleaning protocols
  - Instituting universal masking and temperature checks
  - Creating dedicated spaces for suspected COVID-19 patients

#### **What if patients need access to ambulatory, or outpatient, services?**

- During these unprecedented times, we at Stanford Medicine are here to safely support our patients' health. As shelter-in-place continues, it is reasonable to delay routine, in-person preventive care, but our care teams recommend patients continue to connect with us about all urgent care and chronic disease needs.
- We have increased and enhanced our video visits for all types of visits from primary to specialty care to virtually connect with patients regarding their health and health concerns. If patients have a health concern, they should contact us or self-schedule a video visit on MyHealth. If their care need cannot be addressed virtually, their care team will direct them to an in-person visit.
- We want to ensure that patients feel safe and comfortable coming into our clinics. All Stanford Medicine clinics have instituted a variety of enhanced practices and processes to keep patients safe when they come into our health care facilities, including increased availability of masks and hand sanitizer upon building entry for all patients. All our clinics also practice physical distancing throughout their buildings and actively screen for



symptoms at entry points to ensure those with active symptoms of influenza-like illness are not in the waiting room.

**How are you ensuring that you'll have sufficient supplies (PPE and testing) and space, in case there's a resurgence of COVID-19?**

- Stanford Medicine has a dedicated Supply Chain team that prepares for a variety of scenarios, and continuously adapts to changing conditions. We monitor COVID-19 in the community and our supplies on a daily basis, which allows us to adjust our supply and demand, for both patient care and testing.

April 28, 2020