

Is it safe for me to go to the hospital or should I wait?

The hospital is a safe place to receive care and has taken every precaution by combining strong infection prevention processes, training, testing and supply of personal protective equipment.

For patients, this includes screening all patients and visitors who enter the hospital, isolating anyone that meets potential COVID criteria immediately, and providing testing to those individuals. Those without potential COVID risk will be offered a face mask and hand sanitizer upon entry and asked to practice social distancing in common areas.

- One visitor will be allowed for patients having an elective procedure.
- Visitors that enter the hospital will be required to wear a face mask and sanitize their hands. If a visitor does not have a mask, one will be provided.
- All visitors will be screened prior to entry of the hospital using current CDC criteria and temperature taking.

We encourage you to receive the care recommended by your physician or when needed in a medical emergency. Delaying care can result in additional health complications, increased risk of mortality or loss of function, and longer hospital stays with decreased likelihood of complete recovery.

What does “separating” COVID and non-COVID patients at the hospital mean?

The hospital has developed separate care pathways in their emergency department, inpatient units, and outpatient services to minimize risk of exposure. This starts with screening prior to entry to the hospital.

Potential COVID patients enter through a separate entrance; are isolated in bays, rooms or units designated for COVID care; and have as much of their care brought to them as possible. Their pathway through the hospital will be highly monitored and limited.

For all other patients, this means you will not be waiting, receiving or recovering from care with a known, potential COVID patient next to you. Extra precautions will also be taken, such as having all patients and staff wear masks, frequently cleaning spaces, limiting visitors, and practicing social distancing.

Why isn't everyone getting tested and more frequently?

We recognize the importance of testing and we have access testing - both in-house and outside labs. However, testing is only one part of the effort to minimize exposure and prevent future outbreaks of COVID-19. Patient stratification and infection prevention processes are also important parts of this effort.

Manufacturers recently received FDA approval for tests under the Emergency Use Authorization. However, at this time, testing is still not widely available, there are concerns regarding false negative rates with PCR testing and serology testing is not FDA approved for diagnosing COVID-19.

Should I get tested for COVID-19?

You should get tested if you have potential COVID-19 symptoms: a fever and cough or difficulty breathing. Please notify your physician and proceed to the hospital or testing center.

You may also be asked to be tested before care at the hospital if you are higher risk for complications due to COVID-19. If your physician recommends a test, you will receive instructions on where to provide the specimen. This may be at the physician's office, a commercial lab, or at the hospital.

What does it mean to be higher risk for complications due to COVID-19?

Individuals with weaker heart or lung functions and/or immune systems are potentially at higher risk for complications due to COVID-19. This includes those with certain preexisting conditions such as heart or lung disease, asthma, HIV or AIDs. Patients over 65 are more likely to have these conditions.

Does the hospital have COVID testing capabilities?

Yes, the hospital has invested in testing capabilities. The hospital partners with commercial labs for testing that can be done 24-72 hours in advance. The hospital has in-house, same-day testing for patients with emergent needs. This includes patients scheduled for surgery and whose physicians recommend a test.

How can I protect myself from COVID-19?

You should continue to take CDC recommended actions to protect yourself at all times, including washing your hands often with soap and water, social distancing and wearing a face covering in public spaces.

If you have scheduled care at the hospital, we also recommend self-monitoring your temperature daily for up to 7 days before, as a majority of COVID patients become symptomatic 5 to 7 days after infection.

If you are concerned that you may have symptoms but are not sure whether to call your physician or go to the emergency department, the hospital has a virtual COVID-19 screening tool on their website.

How is the hospital keeping staff safe so they do not infect me?

Hospital staff are well trained and experienced in managing infectious diseases. The hospital has provided universal masking, increased cleaning, increased supply of protective personal equipment (e.g., N-95 masks, gowns) and minimized staff who tend to both COVID and non-COVID patients.

All hospital staff monitor their temperature daily. If they perceive potential COVID symptoms, they notify the hospital, self-isolate, and receive a test. They only return to work when cleared by hospital policy.

What happens to my scheduled care if I may have COVID-19?

The hospital will defer to your physician's medical judgment. If your scheduled care is not urgent and your physician deems it appropriate to postpone the case, you will be contacted to reschedule the case for when you are better.

If your case is urgent and your physician would like to proceed as planned, you will receive a COVID-19 test and the care team will proceed while using appropriate protective equipment and protocols.

How can I limit my time in the hospital?

Please follow instructions for preparing for your scheduled care and arrive at the time requested. If you arrive early, you may be asked to wait outside the hospital or in your vehicle.

Hospital staff will make every effort to be efficient before, during and after your care, including arranging prescreening by phone and post-care virtual visits. This will reduce your time in the hospital.

What if I am concerned about the hospital bill?

To support patients and their loved ones during this challenging time, the hospital has a flexible patient payment plan. The plan has a minimum \$25 per month payment, provides up to 36 months to pay the full bill, and can be tailored to your preferences. You can request more information, including a price estimate for a specific procedure prior to the care.