COVID-19 Checklist for Essential Versus Non-Essential Surgeries
Responding to COVID-19

A March 17, 2020, order from Ohio Department of Health Director Amy Acton, M.D., MPH, called for the cancellation or postponement of all non-essential or elective surgeries. It is intended to limit the spread of COVID-19 and to preserve personnel and supplies to respond to the pandemic as well as to patients in need of urgent care for other reasons.

*It is vital that non-COVID-19 patients who do need important care continue to receive it.*

Some things to consider:

- A surgery or procedure should go forward to save a life, to manage severe disease, or to avoid further harms from an underlying condition.

- The order defines a non-essential surgery as a procedure that can be delayed without undue risk to the current or future health of a patient.

- Ask yourself:
  - Does postponing the procedure threaten the patient’s life?
  - Could postponing the procedure lead to permanent dysfunction of an extremity or organ system?
  - Is there a risk of metastasis or progression of staging?
  - Is there time sensitivity? Could the patient develop rapidly worsening or severe symptoms without the procedure?

  If the answer to any of these questions is yes, the procedure should proceed.

- Each situation will be different. It is not necessarily appropriate to cancel every instance of a specific procedure. Some patients undergoing that procedure may be in urgent need of care, while others will be unharmed if it is postponed.

- The health and age of each individual patient and the risk of severe outcomes — to both physical health and mental health — are among factors that should be considered.

For more information, visit: coronavirus.ohio.gov
If a healthcare provider is unsure, the provider should consult with a colleague. Document that the discussion was held, the decision, and reasoning.

For additional guidance, it is appropriate to reach out to professional societies and associations in specific specialty areas.

Decisions remain the responsibility of providers and local healthcare delivery systems.

When procedures do go forward, the order requires that only people essential to conducting the surgeries or procedures are present in surgery suites or other patient care areas where personal protective equipment is required.

For additional information, visit coronavirus.ohio.gov.

For answers to your COVID-19 questions, call 1-833-4-ASK-ODH (1-833-427-5634).

If you or a loved one are experiencing anxiety related to the coronavirus pandemic, help is available. Call the Disaster Distress Helpline at 1-800-985-5990 (1-800-846-8517 TTY); connect with a trained counselor through the Ohio Crisis Text Line by texting the keyword “4HOPE” to 741 741; or call the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services help line at 1-877-275-6364 to find resources in your community.

Additional resources:
Protect yourself and others from COVID-19 by taking these precautions.

For additional information call 1-833-4-ASK-ODH or visit coronavirus.ohio.gov.

Stay home
Practice social distancing
Get adequate sleep and eat well-balanced meals
Wash hands often with water and soap (20 seconds or longer)
Dry hands with a clean towel or air dry your hands
Cover your mouth with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing
Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands or after touching surfaces
Clean and disinfect "high-touch" surfaces often
Call before visiting your doctor
Practice good hygiene habits

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