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IH COVID-19 UPDATE: Resumption of elective surgeries

Beginning May 19, Interior Health (IH) will resume elective surgeries that were postponed due to COVID-19.

While the pandemic continues to evolve, IH is collaborating with the Ministry of Health to safely resume elective surgeries to support access for patients, both on waitlists and yet to be added. Throughout the resumption of services, our priority is to minimize the risk of transmission of COVID-19.

Interior Health is calling patients to confirm their health status and if they are able and willing to move forward with surgery. We recognize that some individuals may wish to continue to postpone their surgery at this time. Those who choose not to proceed with their surgeries immediately will hold their spot on the waitlist.

In an effort to support as many people as possible, Interior Health will also maximize our ability to provide minor procedures that do not require an operating room, as well as day surgeries that do not require overnight stays in hospital.

Urgent, emergent, and oncology-related surgeries were not impacted by the pause in surgery and will continue as priority cases.

To minimize the risk of transmission of COVID-19 for patients, staff and physicians, a number of measures will be implemented as part of the surgical process:

- When possible, patients will be assessed through a virtual pre-admission clinic by video conference or telephone prior to surgery.
- Consistent screening tools and risk assessment guidelines will be used.
- Patients will be assessed 24-72 hours prior to surgery and upon arrival the day of surgery.
- Surgeries will be scheduled with time to accommodate additional cleaning and infection control measures.

Patients will be rescheduled based on priority.

Interior Health will assess opportunities to expand capacity over the coming months to ensure individuals who need surgery get it as quickly as possible. This plan is dependent on factors such as adequate supply of personal protective equipment, full commitment of all partners, and monitoring of a possible resurgence of COVID-19.

For more information about COVID-19, please visit <https://news.interiorhealth.ca/covid-19/>