



Patient information regarding surgery during the COVID 19 Pandemic

The surgeon(s) at Ducharme General Surgery want to provide the best care for you at all times. Unfortunately, there are many things during the pandemic that are unknown to us and to the rest of the healthcare community. This summary highlights information we want you to understand about surgery during the pandemic. This summary is not all encompassing. If you have questions, you should ask them prior to consenting to or having surgery.

1. We do not know all the possible risks that could happen to patients undergoing 'routine' surgery during the pandemic. Although we require you to be tested for the virus prior to surgery, no test is perfect, and you may be infected despite a negative result. Additionally, you may become infected between the time of your test and the time of surgery. There are reports of unexpected complications including death in patients who had surgery while infected with the COVID 19 virus. IT IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT FOR YOU TO QUARANTINE YOURSELF PRIOR TO YOUR SURGERY – IDEALLY FOR 2 WEEKS to reduce the risk of the unfortunate situation.
2. There is an uncertain, but likely increased, risk of becoming infected with any increase in social interaction. Going to get tested, going to a hospital or surgery center, going for post operative visits or other care associated with surgery increases your risk of exposure to the virus. In all of those settings social distancing of 6 feet may not be possible. You may be exposed to someone carrying the virus.
3. The pandemic has clearly changed the way that care is delivered around the world. Some of the changes will inevitably impact the way you receive care. This will likely include restrictions on visitations by family members and friends. Additionally, the impact on staffing in the hospitals and surgery centers may mean the staff are not as familiar with care of your condition as we would otherwise provide. While we will try to maintain high levels of service, this may affect the experience you have as a patient.
4. The pandemic has impacted healthcare supplies and access to services that you may need in the post operative period. Should complications develop, you may be required to go to an emergency room or be hospitalized. Unknown future events may limit your access to otherwise routine care.
5. It is important to communicate with us and document who would make decisions about your medical care should you not be able to do so. This is especially important given that visitors may not be permitted in some settings. At all times, but especially now, we feel it is important for you to have appointed a medical Power of Attorney and ideally have an advanced directive/living will so that your wishes will be known. If you have established this, please let us know. If you have not, we urge you to address it with your family and make your written wishes clear.

We hope that this has helped you make an informed decision about surgical care in the uncertain time. We are committed to providing the best possible care during this pandemic. Your understanding of the current situation is an important component of that. Please ask if you have any questions.