

May 6, 2020

To: NorthShore Perioperative and Interventional Services Physician and Team Members  
From: Surgical and Interventional Procedure Resumption Task Force  
Subject: COVID—19 Pre-Procedure Testing

The purpose of this memo is to describe the process at NorthShore regarding COVID-19 RT-PCR testing prior to a surgery or an invasive procedure. The pace and intensity of resuming elective surgical and procedural interventions will be based on key factors such as clinical urgency, PPE availability, stress on acute care resources, and workforce availability and will be coordinated and overseen by the Surgical and Interventional Procedure Resumption Task Force.

This guidance is consistent with the guidance issued by the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), and also includes key testing insights for specific populations such as those who have recovered from a COVID infection. This testing process will begin with elective surgeries and invasive procedures scheduled on May 11, 2020.

COVID-19 RT-PCR testing, in addition to symptom and exposure assessment, must be completed within 72 hours of a scheduled surgery or invasive procedure and patients must also self-quarantine in their home after being tested until the day of their surgery or procedure.

In general, this workflow does not apply to office-based procedures. Office based procedures will include COVID symptom screening and fever assessment, but do not include COVID-19 testing pre-procedure. There are a few situations where testing patients for office-based procedures would be indicated. The task force is working directly with those physicians to delineate those procedures.

***As we invite our patients back to our sites of care, it is critical that we implement workflows that emphasize our focus on patient and team member safety.***

A workflow has been established to assess COVID risk and complete COVID testing on elective surgical and invasive procedure cases at NorthShore, effective May 11<sup>th</sup>. The testing process has been developed by a multidisciplinary team and an overview of the process is outlined below:

- At the time an office based scheduler calls Central Scheduling or the interventional department to schedule an elective surgery or procedure, a reminder will be provided to the office based scheduler who is responsible for communicating with the patient three key instructions:
  - Guidance to call their surgeon or doctor if they develop COVID symptoms or fever or have an exposure to someone with COVID.
  - Completion of COVID testing 48 - 72 hours prior to the procedure at the Old Orchard drive thru testing site.
  - Immediate self-quarantine after the test is completed and until the time of arrival at the facility for their surgery or procedure.
- Negative test results will be reported to the patient via NorthShoreConnect (NSC), if the patient has an account. All patients, regardless of NSC account status, will also receive a negative result notification during

the pre-operative/pre-procedure phone call made the day prior to the scheduled procedure. For negative test results, providers will not receive a phone confirmation of the negative result.

- Positive test results will be reported to the provider and the patient via a phone call made by the COVID Test Results Labor Pool. That phone call will address the following key elements:
  - An assessment and documentation of the patient's symptoms or exposure to COVID or if they are asymptomatic and without any COVID exposures
  - Guidance regarding the cancellation of their procedure with instructions on rescheduling after 14 days if they remain asymptomatic and without any COVID exposures
  - Guidance on any needed follow up if symptomatic
  - Guidance on on-going self-isolation and interaction with household contacts
- Any elective procedure scheduled for a patient who tests positive will automatically be removed from the schedule without need for communication to cancel from the surgeon or his/her office.
- If an asymptomatic patient has previously tested positive for COVID and has remained symptom and fever free and without any COVID exposures for 14 days, they will be allowed to proceed with their elective surgery. If a patient has previously tested positive and still has symptoms and or a fever, they will not be allowed to proceed unless it is deemed an urgent procedure.
- Patients who have recovered from a documented COVID infection in the past 60 days and do not have any symptoms or fever in past 14 days will be allowed to proceed with their procedure without COVID testing, because their PCR test may remain positive for many weeks after their illness has resolved.

Please reach out to your department Chair with questions or concerns.