

RETURN TO SERVICES FAQ

Q: What specifically does the governor's new order say about resuming services?

A: We are now able to expand our services, including surgeries and procedures if we maintain 15 percent capacity for the treatment of COVID-19 patients. Because our COVID-19 patient population has stabilized, we are confident we can safely care for patients with COVID-19 and those needing other medical care. As a result of the new order, starting Friday April 30, physician attestation for posting cases is no longer necessary.

Q: When is Houston Methodist resuming scheduled surgeries?

A: Surgery schedules are ramping back up slowly. We have adequate PPE to ensure the safety of our physicians, staff and patients during these surgeries and procedures.

Q: Why is Houston Methodist resuming services when the pandemic is still a concern?

A: It is critical to our community that we safely and thoughtfully begin a return to diagnosing and treating their medical issues. Regardless of the virus, our friends, family and neighbors are still suffering from heart disease, cancer, neurological problems and other serious ailments. We must balance the need to be prepared for COVID-19 patients and the need to care for others without the virus.

Q: Will resuming these services put a strain on our hospital staff or supplies?

A: No. We now have adequate PPE given the extraordinary work of our supply chain professionals, extended use protocols, reusable equipment, protective boxes we've built and other innovations.

We are fortunate to be at a point where we can safely care for all patients, while not putting additional strain on hospital resources. We anticipate our operations to slowly resume over several months.

Q: What safety measures are in place for employees and physicians?

A: We recognize that you may be concerned about being exposed to the COVID-19 virus on the job. It is important to Houston Methodist that you know that your safety is of the highest importance. We will continue to screen all employees and patients when entering our facilities. In addition, employees and physicians will continue to wear the necessary PPE to keep them and others safe. We will continue to work with clinical staff to train on the necessary use of PPE.

Employees, physicians, visitors and patients must wear a mask when visiting our facilities.

Q: Are we doing surveillance testing?

A: Yes we are. For employees, we will soon randomly offer testing to 5% of our employees who work in all patient care areas with a focus on those who interact with COVID patients. Employees will be randomly chosen and strongly encouraged to be tested. These employees will be informed on where to get testing,

We are doing this to provide an increased level of understanding of which employees may be asymptomatic but have the virus. This helps us



protect you, each other and our patients. If you have tested negative or positive before, it will be some time before you are chosen to test again. If you are positive, you will be asked to stay home for seven days and will be paid for the quarantine period under the Enhanced STD Program for COVID positive employees.

Q: What safety measures are in place for patients?

A: The safety, health and well-being of our patients is our top priority. All patients and essential visitors will be screened and should wear a mask when entering our facilities. Our hospitals are taking additional measures to ensure a safe patient experience. This includes requiring patients and visitors to wear a mask and minimize waiting in public spaces, allowing for appropriate social distancing measures when on campus, and the ability to check in remotely. We will also continue to limit visitors. Some campuses will offer curbside check-in. More information will be shared by the physician's office before a procedure or surgery.

Q: What is the visitor policy for inpatients?

A: To protect our patients, visitors, employees and physicians as COVID-19 continues to spread, Houston Methodist campuses will continue to limit visitors and ask them to wear a mask. Visitors for inpatients will be granted only if a nursing unit deems a visitor essential. Essential visitors are not just for patients to have someone there; rather, they are for patients who meet criteria, mentally/physically dependent on needing that visitor, etc. Examples of essential visitors are:

- Hospitalized maternity, postpartum: One healthy partner/parent
- End-of-life patients: Two healthy visitors at a time
- Discharging patients: One healthy visitor to assist

Q: What is the visitor policy for outpatients?

A: For outpatient and ambulatory procedural day surgeries, visitors are limited to one essential visitor for the purposes of providing care, transportation or medical power of attorney. The visitor must be over 18, wear a mask and practice social distancing.

Q: What should patients do to prepare for in-person appointments?

A: Patients play an important role in their own safety, and we are asking them to please partner with us to keep them safe before, during and after their upcoming in-person appointment. We ask that patients please:

- Contact their doctor's office before their appointment if they are experiencing certain ARI (acute respiratory illness) symptoms.
- Review our [Visitor Policy](#) and make arrangements to attend their appointment by themselves, unless they are disabled or have a personal caregiver.
- Patients should come to appointments wearing a mask.

Q: Are we requiring patients to be tested prior to receiving services at our physician offices?

A: We are screening all patients when they schedule their appointment, prior to arrival on campus. Patients who have scheduled surgeries where they will be intubated will be asked to get a COVID-19 test before their surgery. We do an additional screening and temperature check when they arrive at our facilities. Please see this [informational flyer](#) for patients on this topic.

Q: Should patients bring their own mask?

A: Patients are expected to wear masks. If they are coming in for an MRI, however, and don't have a mask that is appropriate for that procedure, we will provide a mask.

Q: Will online scheduling also be available?

A: Yes, online self-scheduling will be available for all imaging procedures, including mammograms.

Q: Who do patients call for more information about their scheduled surgery, procedure or testing?

A: Patients should call their Houston Methodist physician's office with any questions. Also, please refer them this [website](#) for more information.