

Media Release

Wednesday, May 27, 2020

Niagara Health preparing to resume scheduled surgical and outpatient services

Niagara Health has approval to move forward with the safe and gradual resumption of surgical, procedural and outpatient services for our patients and families.

“We look forward to resuming services for our patients and families, but we must do so in a way that recognizes the pandemic is not over,” says Derek McNally, Niagara Health’s Executive Vice President of Clinical Services and Chief Nursing Executive. “We are taking a thoughtful and measured approach to this work to ensure the safety of patients, staff, and physicians. As part of this planning, we need to ensure we maintain space in our hospitals for a potential surge of COVID patients.”

The resumption of services is expected to occur gradually over the coming weeks and months, using a phased approach. Patients will be notified when their surgery or appointment is scheduled. They do not need to contact the hospital.

The ability to proceed with the resumption of services is dependent on hospitals meeting the [criteria established by the Ontario Government](#) for restarting. These criteria include a stable supply of personal protective equipment and medications, and maintaining 85% capacity in our hospitals to ensure there is space for COVID patients.

Individual hospital plans are approved on a regional basis to ensure a more comprehensive and collaborative approach. Niagara Health’s plan has been approved by Ontario Health West.

As Niagara Health prepares to re-open, each program and support service area has developed clear and concise plans to support success. These individual plans are based on the underlying principles of Niagara Health’s overall plan, which include:

Quick Facts

Services will be reintroduced gradually over the coming weeks and months, using a phased approach. These services include surgical, diagnostic imaging and ambulatory clinics.

Patients will be notified when their surgery or appointment is scheduled. They do not need to contact the hospital.

The safety of patients, staff and physicians is our highest priority, understanding that the COVID pandemic is not over.

We will be looking at new ways of delivering care, including increased use of virtual visits.

- Using an ethical decision-making framework to decide urgency and ensure equity of care
- Creating novel ways of delivering care to keep patients, staff, and physicians safe
- Leveraging technology to reduce face-to-face interaction
- Interacting with patients and families to provide support

Throughout the pandemic, hospitals have been delivering urgent and emergency care. We have also increased the number of virtual visits to provide care where possible. Virtual visits will continue, and our clinical teams will look at new ways to provide care virtually.

The hospital remains a safe place to come for care. Everyone is screened for COVID-19 symptoms upon entry. We have implemented measures to ensure physical distancing, hand hygiene, the wearing of masks, and enhanced cleaning of the environment to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Patients who have concerns about their health status should contact their clinic or physician's office for guidance.

Anyone experiencing serious symptoms, should call 9-1-1 or go to the nearest Emergency Department if able.

Please [click here](#) to see a message from the Hamilton Norfolk Haldimand Brant Burlington Hospital CEOs Committee.

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