

Elective Surgery and Procedures

Below are some Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) to provide answers to some common health related questions about elective surgery and elective procedures (such as Endoscopy) in South Australian public hospitals in the COVID-19 environment.

Will my elective surgery/procedure still go ahead?

On 4 January 2022 new restrictions on elective surgery were introduced in response to a significant increase in COVID-19 cases due to the Omicron variant, to ensure urgent elective surgery could continue.

Following the steady decline in case numbers [the Emergency Management \(Appropriate Surgery During COVID-19 Pandemic No 8\) Direction 2022](#), came into effect on 07 February 2022 revoking previous Directions. [Elective surgery and procedures are resuming](#) in a staged approach and this may impact when your surgery is rescheduled.

If your surgery/procedure was postponed, you will have maintained your place on the list and your surgery/procedure will be rebooked now that restrictions have been removed.

The hospital where your surgery/procedure is booked will contact you if your booking has been affected.

Do I need to be vaccinated before my surgery?

You do not need to be vaccinated before your planned surgery/procedure. However, the most recent studies show that vaccinations significantly lower the risk of COVID-19 related complications and transmission of the virus to others and we strongly encourage vaccination.

Please speak with your general practitioner and/or hospital staff about your circumstances prior to your scheduled surgery/procedure.

Hospital staff will ask you for your vaccination status to update your medical records.

Do I need to have a COVID-19 test before I have surgery?

Yes, even if you are fully vaccinated you will be required to complete a Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) prior to your scheduled surgery/procedure and provide evidence of this to your hospital.

Some hospitals will provide a SA Health approved RAT kit to use at home at no cost. Anyone feeling unwell, especially with respiratory symptoms, is advised to get a PCR test at a testing site.

PCR testing is free at [hospital testing sites and drive through facilities](#) across South Australia.

Your treating hospital will provide you with information regarding testing requirements.

What happens if I receive a positive COVID-19 result?

You must advise your treating hospital of your positive COVID-19 result prior to your surgery/procedure. If you cannot provide evidence of a negative COVID-19 test your scheduled surgery/procedure may not go ahead. The hospital clinical team will review your clinical situation and decide whether to proceed with surgery or to defer your surgery.

You will be screened for any symptoms, asked about your travel history, and other risk factors prior to your surgery/procedure.

Please check with the individual hospital or health service for current requirements.



Are there any restrictions for visitors?

All visitors to public hospitals (including parents and guardians) must provide proof of COVID-19 vaccination status upon entry (unless they have an approved medical exemption, or children under 12 years). Some health services may implement additional risk management strategies to facilitate unvaccinated visitors.

Currently, visitor restrictions are in place across all metropolitan and regional health services with one visitor per day allowed in most health settings. Exemptions may be granted for end of life and or compassionate reasons.

Visitors may be asked to wear additional PPE when entering a high-risk setting, as determined by the health service.

For up to date visitor details, please see [Visiting Public Hospitals during COVID-19](#) or check with the individual hospital or health service before you visit.

How will I be safe if I have surgery at a hospital when there is a COVID-19 outbreak?

Protocols are in place to protect both you and hospital staff, including infection control guidelines and use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

Throughout your hospital stay your clinical team will follow current national guidelines regarding preventing infections by doing such things as washing their hands, wearing gloves, gowns, masks and protective eye wear, when needed.

Who can I contact if am unsure about having my surgery or procedure?

The hospital where your surgery/procedure is scheduled is the best place to contact. They will also be able to explain to you what plans are in place at the facility to keep you safe, and the protocols that you and your family will need to follow to keep everyone safe.

Where can I find more information?

To find out more about COVID-19 go to frequently asked questions at [SA Health website](#) or [covid-19.sa.gov.au](https://www.covid-19.sa.gov.au).

For information on your planned procedure, and any associated requirements and updates please contact the relevant [metropolitan hospital](#) or [regional hospital](#).

For information on COVID-19 in languages other than English, see SA Health's [Translated Resources](#) page.

For advice on COVID-19, resources and information for Aboriginal community members, visit the [Aboriginal communities](#) page.

For information on current visiting restrictions at public hospitals during COVID-19 visit the [Visiting Public Hospitals](#) page.

For more information

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