

COVID-19

Coronavirus (COVID-19) and Elective Surgery

MAY 7, 2020



An elective surgery is scheduled in advance and is not an emergency. To help you decide whether to have an elective surgery at UAMS, please read the information below.

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19, is a new type of coronavirus. It often affects people's lungs. There is no vaccine or treatment for COVID-19 right now. The symptoms of COVID-19 can range from mild to severe. Older adults and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions may be at a higher risk for severe illness.

The most common symptoms are:	Less common symptoms are:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fever• Cough• Shortness of breath	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fatigue (tired for a long time)• Headache• Sore throat• Nausea (upset stomach)• Diarrhea• Muscle aches• Loss of taste and smell

What is UAMS doing to protect patients from COVID-19?

- COVID-19 patients and the staff who care for them are separated from other patients and care teams. This includes patients we know have COVID-19 and patients we think may have the virus.
- Visitors are allowed at UAMS only when there is a special need. This means you will not be able to bring anyone into UAMS with you or have visitors while you are in the hospital.
- Every person who comes to UAMS is screened for symptoms of COVID-19. This includes employees, patients, and other approved visitors. To screen each person, we take their temperature and ask questions about travel and their risk for COVID-19.
- Everyone at UAMS must wear a mask at all times.

Can I get COVID-19 if I come to UAMS for my surgery?

The steps UAMS is taking to protect you will help reduce your risk of getting COVID-19. Even with all new safety measures at UAMS, it is still possible to get COVID-19. Because COVID-19 is spread from person to person, mostly through coughs and sneezes, this could happen before, during, or after your surgery.

Do I have to get tested for COVID-19 before my surgery?

Yes. You will need a negative COVID-19 test within 48 hours of the beginning of your surgery.

To get tested:

1. Go to the UAMS drive-thru screening area on UAMS campus. It is at the corner of Shuffield Drive and Jack Stephens Drive (across from Spine Institute). The drive-thru is usually open 8:30 am to 5:00 pm every day. Call 501-296-1531 for current open hours.
2. When you get to the testing area, call 501-296-1531 from your car and say you need to be tested because you have a scheduled surgery at UAMS. Your test results will be ready before your surgery.

Between your test and your surgery:

- You must stay at home.
- You may only be around the people you live with.
- Stay away from people who are sick.

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What should I expect when I come to UAMS for my surgery?

You must wear a mask while you are at UAMS. A cloth mask is fine. Please bring one with you. If you do not have one, use a handkerchief or other piece of fabric to cover your mouth and nose. Put your mask on before you get out of your car. Leave it on until a UAMS employee asks you to take it off.

When you come inside UAMS, you will be screened for COVID-19. A UAMS employee will ask if you have:

- Traveled outside of Arkansas in the last 14 days
- Been around someone with COVID-19 in the last 14 days
- Had any recent symptoms of COVID-19 (including cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, fever, muscle ache, or a loss of taste or smell)
- Been tested for COVID-19 -

What should I do to protect myself from COVID-19 before my surgery?

- Wash your hands.
- Avoid close contact with others.
- Stay home as much as possible
- Wear a face mask when you leave your house
- Clean and disinfect surfaces in your home that get touched a lot
- Stay away from people who are sick.

How can I protect myself from COVID-19 after my surgery?

- Use the same steps you took to protect yourself before your surgery.
- If you get COVID-19 after your surgery, it may be harder for you to heal. Because of your recent surgery, your symptoms could be more severe, and your risk of death from COVID-19 may be higher.
- It is very important that you follow your doctor's instructions after surgery.
- Watch for symptoms of COVID-19 and notify your care team immediately if you begin to have fever or other symptoms.

What if I do not want to have my surgery right now?

- Talk about this important decision with your family and others who help you make health decisions. You do not have to have your surgery now.
- We can help you reschedule for another time.
- Talk to your doctor about:
 - How your current health problems may change if you decide to have your surgery later
 - What you can do to manage your health problems until you have surgery