



Arkansas Department of Health

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Governor Asa Hutchinson
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March 21, 2020

In view of the uncertainty and increase in cases of COVID -19 there are increasing concerns of hospital beds availability as well as staff capabilities in hospitals statewide. For this reason, the Arkansas Department of Health is recommending that elective surgery be postponed statewide. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that healthcare facilities and clinicians should prioritize urgent and emergency visits and procedures now and for the coming several weeks. The following actions can preserve staff, personal protective equipment (PPE), and patient care supplies; ensure staff and patient safety; and expand available hospital capacity during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Procedures, testing, and office visits that can be safely postponed should be rescheduled to an appropriate future date.
- Routine dental and eyecare visits should be postponed.
- Emergent, urgent and time-sensitive care will continue.

Small rural hospitals under 60 beds and critical access hospitals, though strongly advised to follow this guidance to maximize resources, are excluded from this guidance.

Exceptions to this guidance should be made in the following circumstances:

- If there is a threat to the patient's life if the procedure is not performed.
- If there is a threat of permanent dysfunction of an extremity or organ system if the surgery is not done.
- If there is a risk of metastasis or progression of staging of a disease or condition if surgery is not performed.
- If there is a risk that the patient's condition will rapidly deteriorate if surgery is not done, and there is a threat to life, or to an extremity or organ system, or of permanent dysfunction or disability.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/healthcare-facilities/index.html>