Rescheduling Medical Care is Important

If you had to delay your elective surgery or medical treatment because of the COVID-19 pandemic, you may be wondering when, or if, it is safe to reschedule. While routine medical check-ups and other non-urgent medical services can be postponed temporarily, they will need to be scheduled eventually. To maintain your health and manage chronic conditions, it is important to contact your healthcare providers and learn more about their plans for your treatment during the coronavirus pandemic.

Know Before You Go

Understand your healthcare provider’s plan to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Your healthcare providers should explain to you the new procedures they have put in place which may include:

- Conducting your pre-op visit over the phone or video conference.
- Scheduling fewer patients and reconfiguring the waiting room to meet social distancing standards.
- Requiring you to wait in your car before being called in for your appointment.
- Requiring patients having surgical procedures to be tested for COVID-19.

- Prohibiting family members and visitors.
- Screening you for fever and other symptoms when you arrive.
- Requiring you to wear a mask or cloth face covering during your visit.
- Asking you to use hand sanitizer frequently during your visit.
- Enhanced cleaning of the facility, especially frequently touched surfaces.

How to Protect Yourself When You Visit a Healthcare Facility

- Clean your hands often and ensure your healthcare providers do as well.
- Wear a cloth facemask. Masks should completely cover your nose and mouth. Do not touch your mask during wear. Remove mask only by touching ear loops or ties. Clean your hands immediately afterward.
- Maintain social distancing of at least 6 feet in the waiting room.

- Do not wear gloves into your healthcare facility. Unlike hands, gloves cannot be washed.
- Don’t bring visitors or family members with you unless necessary. Ask your healthcare providers in advance about visitor restrictions.
- Be patient. Some of the precautions being put in place to protect you mean that your wait time may increase.

REMEMBER THE BASICS

- Wash your hands often with soap and water or use hand sanitizer. Keep hand sanitizer with you so you can clean your hands when you are out. Wash your hands immediately upon returning home.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with your elbow or a tissue.
- Keep hands away from your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Stay home if you feel sick and call your provider immediately if you experience any symptoms of COVID-19.

The Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology (APIC) is creating a safer world through the prevention of infection. APIC’s nearly 16,000 members develop and direct infection prevention and control programs that save lives and improve the bottom line for healthcare facilities. APIC advances its mission through patient safety, education, implementation science, competencies and certification, advocacy, and data standardization. Visit us at apic.org.