

## 7/6/2020 Update:

As you may have heard, Governor Abbott issued an executive order on June 25<sup>th</sup> 2020 for hospitals in Harris county to stop elective surgeries in order to save bed capacity for COVID-19 patients effectively at midnight 6/26/20. There is currently no end date for this order. This order affects facilities that are licensed as hospitals, but It does not affect ASCs (smaller free-standing surgical centers.)

This order is ONLY currently affecting our Memorial Hermann Cypress, Katy, Memorial City, Greater Heights, Southwest and St. Joseph's downtown hospitals.

Since the intent of the executive order is to protect hospital capacity, not a shortage of PPE as in the case of the last elective surgery ban, the major hospital systems have already confirmed that any outpatient case will not be affected. Basically, if the case does not require an overnight bed, it is not affected by this order.

For now, we will not voluntarily cancel any of your cases unless the hospital tells us we must at which time a decision can be made between you and your surgeon as to the best course of action. Our goal is to meet the surgical needs of our patients in the safest and most timely manner. We are here to support you!

Since this news just occurred yesterday, we know there may be some confusion. Please be sure to contact us with any questions or concerns your health and safety are always our priority! Comments and questions can be submitted to [feedback@southwestsurgical.com](mailto:feedback@southwestsurgical.com).

**At Southwest Surgical Associates we remain focused on caring for our patients by providing high-quality healthcare services when you need them. Our practice is open and continues to see patients for health care needs.**

Our patients are our primary concern. Please see the measures below that have been put in place to allow us to continue to safely provide high-quality care for you during this COVID 19 crisis.

- Until otherwise stated, SWSA is currently OPEN for business with our standard business hours of Monday through Friday 8:30-5:00 PM. Existing and new patients are welcome, if they are symptom-free of illness. Non-emergent surgical cases are being pre-scheduled for dates in the future to hold slots for patients wanting surgery but who have been unable to schedule during the elective surgery ban.
- We are also offering Telemedicine appointments, please contact our office at 713-772-1200. Discounted rates for NEW & Est. self-pay patients!
- NEW "Car to Exam Room" Protocol was created to eliminate your time in the waiting area. Please complete this online pre-visit check-in including all health questions. You will be prompted to add pictures of your ID and insurance card as well as make any necessary co-payment. Patients who checked in online can call us when you arrive to the building. The direct number to call will be given to you at the time of your appointment confirmation. We will call you back right away to either

confirm that your exam room completely disinfected and ready for you OR to ask you to wait in the comfort of your car until your exam room is ready. Once ready, we will call you to come up to the office and escort you straight back to the exam room. Note: We are allowing a little extra time between appointments for coronavirus screening and extra infection control measures.

- Our standard sterilization and infection control practices exceed all state and federal guidelines including the elimination of all infectious virus and bacteria and COVID-19 is no exception. In addition, we are taking extra measures to protect you, including wiping treatment areas and common countertops, door handles, and restrooms after each patient.
- If you or someone in your family is currently or has experienced ANY symptoms of illness (including fever, cough, or flu-like symptoms) during the last 14 days prior to your appointment, please notify our office. We will be happy to reschedule your appointment to a future date.
- If you must have a family member accompany you to your visit, please limit to 1 individual.

Thank you for your understanding and patience during this time. Please contact our office with any questions at 713-772-1200 or email us at [info@southwestsurgical.com](mailto:info@southwestsurgical.com).