



# COVID-19 (NOVEL CORONAVIRUS) UPDATE

April 22, 2020

## Intermountain updates guidelines for surgeries and procedures

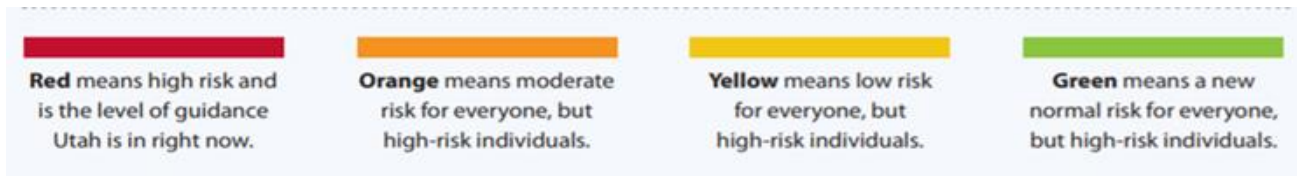
Dear Colleagues,

Because Utah acted early and boldly to reduce the spread of COVID-19, we've been successful so far in flattening the curve. These efforts have made it possible for us to cautiously expand surgery to the outpatient setting.

In the coming days, Intermountain Healthcare and other Utah health systems will transition to updated guidelines for surgeries and procedures consistent with revised recommendations from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid, a joint statement from national surgical societies, and Utah Governor Gary Herbert's announcement on April 21.

### New guidelines

Utah has shared four COVID-19 risk categories:



We're moving from the highest-risk, RED category, to the moderate-risk, ORANGE category.

Under the ORANGE category that we will enter within the next few days, we'll continue to perform surgeries for emergency care, and medically necessary, time-sensitive cases. We will also add ambulatory procedures (no overnight stay) for patients with surgical treatment needs as determined by their physician and facility OR (Operating Room) Council, and who have low risk for COVID-19 complications.

### There are types of surgeries and procedures that will still be postponed

At this time, we will continue to postpone surgeries and procedures:

- Requiring an admission to a hospital or step-down facility and are not time sensitive
- For COVID-19 positive patients whose surgical needs are not emergent
- Involving patients at greater risk for more severe COVID-19 illness

### Prioritization of surgeries and procedures

Surgical and clinical leaders and OR Councils will continue to work with individual physicians to evaluate and schedule those cases that are now appropriate per the guidance from CMS, the Utah Department of Health, and the Utah Hospital Association. Cases that meet the guidelines will proceed because we have adequate supplies of PPE, medications, and equipment. If supply chains become strained, and other variables escalate including increased hospitalizations, then the state may return the COVID-19 risk category to RED. Patients and caregivers will also need to follow COVID-19 testing protocols for these surgeries and procedures.

As we continue to battle this pandemic, the ongoing flexibility and commitment of our teams and the community to flatten the curve will be vital. We will continue preparing for a potential surge, with real-time monitoring of the COVID-19 risk in the community in collaboration with the Utah Department of Health, the Utah Hospital Association, and other health systems in the state. We will align and adjust our plans accordingly.

Sincerely,

Mark Briesacher, MD  
SVP, Chief Physician Executive  
Intermountain Healthcare



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