



# Kaleida Health

## Frequently Asked Questions: Your Surgery during the COVID-19 Pandemic

### The Hospital Visit

**What can I expect when I arrive in terms of COVID-19 protective measures?**

Each person (employee, patient or visitor) entering our facilities is temperature screened and given a surgical mask, which is required to be worn at all times within our hospitals.

**Can I wait inside my car when I arrive, or do I have to come inside to check in? If so, what safety measures are in place for check-in?**

All patients come inside to check in, and they are taken or directed to their surgical/procedural location.

**Can my insurance coverage be confirmed before I check in by telephone or computer? Or do I have to meet with a staff member on-site?**

Preadmission testing (PAT) – whether by phone or in person – is always preferable and will be offered where available.

**Will I be with others in a waiting room, or will I be kept in a room away from other patients?**

All attempts are being made to keep individuals at least 6 feet apart in seating areas. Universal masking is used.

**Do I need to wear a mask? Will all other patients and staff wear masks?**

Yes. All staff and patients are masked throughout their stay.

**Is there an elevator policy? How frequently are the elevators cleaned?**

If you need to ride in an elevator, be assured we are cleaning elevators several times throughout the day. We are also making every effort to limit the number of people in each elevator to allow for physical distancing.

**Will there be physical barriers, such as glass or Plexiglas, between staff with whom I am speaking? If not, will they be six feet away from me?**

Plexiglas dividers have been installed in hospital emergency departments, labor & delivery units and food service locations across the organization. In addition to enhanced cleaning protocols, the transparent partitions, designed to block virus-containing droplets from the nose and mouth, offer an extra level of protection for staff as well as patients and visitors. Areas without glass or Plexiglas barriers enforce social distancing of six feet. In addition, with our universal masking policy, everyone in the facility is wearing a mask when within six feet of others.

**Are the staff members I encounter also treating patients who have COVID-19?**

Dedicated COVID-19 nursing units and teams are being utilized for patients who demonstrate symptoms and test positive for the virus.

**Are patients who have COVID-19 in the same facility as me? If so, what safety measures are in place to ensure we are separated?**

Dedicated COVID-19 nursing units and teams are being utilized for patients who demonstrate symptoms and test positive for the virus.

**Will I be close to others if I walk through the hallways or other common areas? If so, what safety measures are in place?**

Universal masking is used throughout the facility. This reduces the spread of COVID-19 to 1%. All staff and visitors entering the facility are fever free. In addition, persons under investigation for COVID-19 and COVID-19 positive patients are cohorted within the facility and away from non-COVID-19 areas.

**If I need to be taken into other areas of the facility for testing or exams, what is the process and what safety measures are in place?**

Universal masking is used along with containment of COVID-19 positive patients and persons under investigation.

**Who are all the people I can expect to interact with at the facility? How will staff introduce themselves or care for me when they are wearing personal protective equipment?**

There are many reasons why care providers wear personal protective equipment. Staff should introduce themselves prior to providing care. If there is a question about who someone is or what their role is, please don't hesitate to ask.

## **Surgery Process**

**Will I be tested for COVID-19 and have my temperature taken before my scheduled operation?**

With adequate testing put in place, ALL surgical patients are COVID-19 tested prior to their procedure and required to self-isolate until their surgery takes place to decrease the risk of exposure. Surgery is cancelled for anyone testing positive.

**If I need to have an emergency operation, will I be tested for COVID-19 and have my temperature taken before?**

All emergent patients receive a set of vital signs – including a temperature – prior to or upon the initiation of a lifesaving procedure. All emergent patients receiving a procedure are screened for COVID-19. If COVID-19 is a concern following the procedure, the patient will be sent to a COVID-19 unit if they remain in the hospital.

## **What special precautions are being taken to ensure the operating room is safe from COVID-19?**

Along with testing all surgical patients for COVID-19, universal temperature screening and masking for all visitors and staff, and restricted visitation to ensure social distancing, Kaleida Health also has designated operating rooms for COVID-19 positive patients. That means that surgical patients who test negative for the virus will be in operating rooms only used for other negative COVID-19 patients. In addition, enhanced and more frequent cleaning procedures are in place for all operating rooms.

## **Facility Management**

### **How has the facility determined that it is now safe to begin scheduling operations?**

Kaleida Health has reviewed the criteria sent from New York State and the Department of Health. We have met all the requirements in terms of capacity, supplies and cleanliness and procedures in order to perform surgery safely.

### **Are federal and local government recommendations for facility management being followed according to our current phase of the COVID-19 recovery plan? If so, how?**

Kaleida Health is following federal, state and county COVID-19 recommendations. These guidelines change frequently as new knowledge is acquired and community prevalence fluctuates.

### **How is the facility disinfected, and how often?**

We have educated our staff and instituted additional cleanliness procedures to hit high traffic areas numerous times daily. Added high grade disinfecting products are used throughout the building. There are also designated cleaning crews for COVID-19 positive units.

### **Is everyone who works at the facility having their temperatures taken and being tested for COVID-19? If so, how often?**

Yes, all employees have their temperature taken upon entry. Only employees who are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 are being tested or if they screen for a high-risk exposure.

### **Does the facility have enough personal protective equipment for staff?**

We have secured adequate levels of PPE to ensure the safety and protection of our employees including N95 masks, surgical/procedure masks, isolation gowns, gloves, goggles and face shields.

## **During Your Stay**

### **How will I receive food, if I stay overnight? How is the food prepared?**

Dietary staff prepare food on site and deliver to all non-COVID-19 units. These staff have their temperatures taken upon entry into the facility and wear facemasks. COVID-19 unit staff (nurses, nurse aides) deliver food to patients with COVID-19 or patients who are suspected of having COVID-19.

**As I recover, will having this procedure put me at a higher risk of getting COVID-19? Why or why not?**

Kaleida Health wants your procedure or surgery and your recovery to be as safe as possible. All staff members adhere to the highest standards of infection prevention precautions, including universal use of face masks and meticulous hand disinfection to prevent you from becoming infected. We also will screen you ahead of time for symptoms of COVID-19 and will test you for COVID-19 prior to your surgery or procedure to minimize the risk of possible COVID-19 infection at the time it is performed. All of these measures should make you confident that your recovery will be uneventful.

**Will being at the hospital put me at a higher risk of getting COVID-19? Why or why not?**

No. With enhanced cleaning protocols in place, COVID-19 care being provided in designated units, and staff wearing appropriate personal protective equipment and following proper hand hygiene processes, we are taking all the necessary steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19 within our facilities.

**Can I have visitors? If so, how will they be protected while visiting me?**

See our website for the latest visitation policy: <https://www.kaleidahealth.org/general-information/visitinghours.asp>

**How will my family receive updates on my well-being?**

Upon entry into the facility, you will be asked to provide a family member who should receive updates along with their phone number. Our providers will use this information to keep each family updated. Families can call your nursing unit and speak with your care team.

**Will the presence of COVID-19 in my community change how long I stay in the facility following surgery?**

No.

**How will social distancing impact my recovery from surgery?**

You and your caregivers will need to pay strict attention to social distancing to avoid contracting COVID-19. Acquiring this disease following your surgery could have a negative impact on your recovery.

## **Off-site Care**

**Are telehealth visits or phone calls with a member of my care team an option for me?**

Kaleida Health is offering video and phone visits for our Emergency Departments and many outpatient clinics. For more information on the KaleidaCares telehealth program, visit <https://www.kaleidahealth.org/videovisits/>.

**Can home healthcare services be provided instead of a trip to the facility before or after my operation?**

Kaleida Health offers home health care through the Visiting Nursing Association of Western New York. Please speak with your physician to determine if you are eligible for home healthcare services.