

FACT SHEET

RESUMPTION OF ELECTIVE SURGERY

May 20, 2020

Today, the Department updated the policy on elective surgeries and procedures.

BACKGROUND

In line with the rest of the nation, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs initially released a policy on March 24, 2020 postponing all elective surgeries and procedures to conserve personal protective equipment, optimize available medical staff for response to COVID-19 patient care requirements, and protect patients.

That policy provided exceptions for those procedures which would impact deployability and readiness of military personnel and when delaying would increase the risk to a level that the physician determined was unacceptable.

This policy was in keeping with an [Executive Order](#) to apply critical medical resources (medical staff and equipment) where they are most needed, and reduce COVID-19 exposure risk to DOD medical staff and beneficiaries.

While the initial postponement was throughout the Military Health System, we understand that conditions moving forward are changing at different rates in different areas.

WHAT'S NEW?

This new policy aligns the resumption of elective procedures with the department's health protection condition (HPCON) framework and the administration's Opening Up America Again plan.

- At HPCON C: May consider resuming outpatient elective procedures
- At HPCON B: May consider resuming inpatient elective procedures

The department continues to encourage the use of virtual care, when appropriate and maintains the previously identified exceptions to policy for maintaining readiness, deployability, and patient safety.

The policy instructs military Medical and Dental Treatment Facility Directors and Commanders on the factors to consider in resuming elective procedures including:

- Installation HPCON levels, healthcare capacity including the TRICARE network
- Medical and dental facility staffing levels
- Personal Protective Equipment availability

Q&A

Q1. How can I find out if I can proceed with my elective surgery?

A1. Work through your Medical Treatment Facility (MTF) or Dental Treatment Facility (DTF). Each facility can address your upcoming procedure and can provide guidance on how to proceed.

Q2. Who is impacted by this change?

A2. This policy applies to all eligible beneficiaries who use our MTFs or DTFs including: Active Duty Service Members, their family members, retirees and their family members, Reserve Component and National Guard service members on active duty or issued a delayed-effective date active duty order, and any other eligible beneficiary.

Q3. How will the resumption of elective procedures be determined?

A3. Each MTF or DTF commander or director will make the decision to resume elective procedures, based on the factors outlined in the memo.

Q4. What else should I know?

A4. We encourage any beneficiary with questions to contact their local MTF or DTF with questions.