

Service Changes During COVID-19 Pandemic

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why are there service changes at the hospital?

LHSC continues taking actions to reduce the transmission of COVID-19 and help keep people safe. Based on government directives, the hospital reduced clinical services to provide only urgent and emergency care, as well as essential health services. As things are opening up, LHSC is moving forward with initial plans to gradually and carefully expand some clinical services that were paused during the pandemic.

What services are being expanded as part of LHSC's initial plan?

Planned surgeries, procedures and ambulatory care for patients at LHSC are slowly resuming, with prioritization based on clinical evidence and need. We are expanding care gradually and carefully, as hospitals must stay ready for any surges in COVID-19 patients. Additional services will resume as soon as it is safe to do so.

What will happen with my care plan?

We will contact you whenever there is a change to your appointment or procedure. If your care has been delayed, we will be in touch with you as soon as we can to discuss opportunities to reschedule. We know you may need time to prepare. Appointments are being booked as telephone or virtual care as much as possible. If you have any questions or concerns about your health, you can reach out to your physician or other member of your health-care team.

When will all services be restored and return to normal?

Hospitals are still facing a lot of challenges. LHSC is regularly monitoring our volumes and the impact on quality of care and safety. The expansion plans will be adjusted along the way. We are working hard to safely resume additional services as soon as possible.

Who is making these decisions and how?

All treatment decisions are being carefully reviewed by the patient's health-care team. Clinical areas in the hospital are following an ethical prioritization process based on clinical evidence and need. Based on the provincial framework, hospitals are guided by the four foundational principles of proportionality, minimizing harm to patients, equity and reciprocity. LHSC's core values of compassion, teamwork, curiosity and accountability continue to guide our daily decision-making during the pandemic.

I'm concerned about my health, what can I do?

We recognize that changes in our service delivery can cause uncertainty and worry for patients and their loved ones. Your care is important to us. If you have concerns, including new worsening symptoms, please reach out to your physician or other members of your health-care team directly. If you have an emergency or serious medical injuries and conditions, please call 911 immediately or go to an Emergency Department.

I will be coming into the hospital for my scheduled care. Is it safe?

The hospital remains safe. Patients coming in for scheduled services are health screened at the door. Patients with a suspected case of COVID-19 are separated from other patients, and a number of protocols are followed to protect the health and safety of our staff, physicians and patients.

Are visitors allowed at the hospital?

LHSC is temporarily limiting family/caregiver presence and other visitation in order to maintain a safe environment during the pandemic. These changes are aligned with recommendations from the Ministry of Health. We are committed to patient and family-centred care, and will make every effort to meet the needs of patients while these temporary measures are in place. Please visit the hospital website for the most current information and instructions.

Will I be health screened when I come for my visit?

Yes, the main entrances have been restricted so that everyone who comes into the hospital is screened. This helps identify signs and symptoms of illness quickly. You may also be called in advance for pre-screening.

Will I have to wear a mask?

All patients coming in for scheduled visits are required to wear a mask upon entry to the hospital. You will be provided a mask, but you are encouraged to wear your own including a cloth mask. There will be exceptions for patients who cannot tolerate a mask due to their health condition.

Are patients being tested for COVID-19?

Patients with symptoms are being tested for COVID-19. Patients without symptoms who are undergoing a high risk procedure will be tested if they are at risk due to their medical condition.

I was booked for a surgery. Will I have to re-do my pre-admission appointment?

Depending on when your new surgical date is, you may require a follow-up visit before surgery either in-person or by a phone or virtual care visit.

I've already had my care delayed and I'm still being asked to wait. Why?

We know it's very difficult when you've been waiting a long time. Please know your care is important to us and your health-care team continues to monitor your care closely. You can contact your physician if you experience changes in your symptoms.

Why is it safer for me to delay this important treatment or procedure than to come in to the hospital?

While things are getting better, the virus is still spreading in the community. We have strong measures in place to protect people in the hospital, but coming here does mean you will be in physical contact with more people. For each patient, there is a careful consideration as to whether it is riskier for you to delay treatment or come to the hospital now. We know that some people are more susceptible to COVID-19 and would be at a higher risk of complications and poor outcomes if they become sick.

What if I am involved in a clinical research study?

The majority of research activity in the hospitals was paused during the pandemic, with only essential studies continuing. The hospital's research arm, Lawson Health Research Institute, is developing its own plans for gradual resumption of hospital-based research activity. If you are involved in a study, that team will contact you directly about any changes.

My symptoms are getting worse. What should I do?

If you have concerns, including new or worsening symptoms, you can reach out to your physician or other members of your health-care team. If you have an emergency or serious medical injuries or conditions, please call 911 immediately or go to an Emergency Department.

What if I have general comments or concerns about my care?

Please contact a Patient Relations Specialist at 519-685-8500 ext. 52036.

Where can I get the most updated information about the COVID-19 from London Health Sciences Centre?

Please visit the website at www.lhsc.on.ca/coronavirus for the most current updates.

What resources are available for patients and families?

If you visit the COVID-19 Updates section of LHSC's website, there is a section for patient and family support that includes a Family Information and Support Centre and resources for children and families to talk about COVID-19.

www.lhsc.on.ca/coronavirus/family-information-and-support-centre-resources)