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Protecting yourself before surgery – Patient Information Leaflet

Updated Advice 22 March 2021 – **Self Isolation prior to your surgery is advised.**

Who is this leaflet for?

This leaflet should be read by all patients having surgery in Guernsey. All patients undergoing non-emergency surgical procedures involving general anaesthetic (or Spinal/Epidural type of anaesthetic) are being advised to 'self-isolate' for 14 days prior to their surgery.

For some more urgent surgery it may not be possible to isolate for 14 days prior to surgery, but you are still advised to isolate for the period from booking to the date of your surgery.

Why are you being asked to self-isolate?

We are advising you to self-isolate for your own protection. Evidence from UK and other countries suggest it is very risky to develop COVID-19 disease during the period immediately after surgery, with a large increase in risk of death or serious complications. It is therefore vital that you do not have surgery when you may be incubating COVID-19. As the incubation period is up to 14 days, isolating yourself during this period will minimise the risk.

As well as directly making surgery safer for you, self-isolation will also help protect other patients and staff from the risk of you inadvertently infecting them with COVID during your hospital attendance.

What about testing?

All patients will have a COVID-19 swab taken prior to surgery, and you will also be carefully screened for symptoms prior to surgery, however a negative swab does not guarantee you are not going to develop COVID-19 a few days later if you have already been exposed.

General Advice

General advice about self-isolation is on the gov.gg website. The best way for you to protect yourself will depend on home and family arrangements. The main focus should be to keep yourself separate from other people by not going out of the house to the workplace, shops or other gatherings. You should also separate yourself within the house from household members who continue to spend time with people outside the house at work, shops etc.

Exercise

For the purpose of protecting yourself prior to surgery, self-isolation should not stop you from taking regular exercise out of the house (e.g. going for a walk on your own) as long as you can maintain social distancing from others during the exercise. For most patients planning for surgery we would indeed encourage moderate exercise on the run-up to surgery.

This advice only applies to pre-op patients - if you are self-isolating for other reasons such as travel or contact with a person with COVID-19 you are not permitted to exercise away from the home.

Review of this advice

We will review this advice regularly and will provide updated advice if the situation changes.

Dr Graham Beck
MSG COVID Lead

Updated 17 March 2021