

## **Elective Surgery Phase 5 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).**

**Q. When will my operation be?**

**A.** This will depend on the type of operation you require and the specialty you are under. All urgent and priority surgery will continue to be delivered as and when required but undoubtedly, and principally because of the theatre disruption we have experienced as a result of the COVID-19 response, almost all surgery will be delivered outside of the contract waiting time of eight weeks. We are unable at present to provide you with an exact date for your surgery but assure you that as soon as we can book your operation, we will be in touch.

**Q. Are the theatres back up and running normally?**

**A.** The capacity in our theatres continues to improve, although it is not yet back to pre COVID-19 capacity due mainly to staffing challenges which are being actively addressed. Throughout all lockdown phases, we have continued to operate on a reduced capacity to allow urgent, priority and (latterly) minor surgical cases to be carried out, whilst ensuring patient safety and contributing to suppressing COVID-19.

**Q. Why were HSC/MSG unable to continue to operate at the same capacity during COVID-19?**

**A.** The reduced capacity, such as the loss of two Day Patient Unit theatres (to provide the temporary COVID-19 Intensive Care Unit), was necessary to ensure patient safety. Further elements of the strategy including the separation of COVID-19 from non-COVID-19 patients, allowing extra time for the use of increased Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and adhering to distancing measures as per Public Health guidelines seriously impacted our normal efficiency and capacity. It was also very important to minimise patient throughput when COVID-19 cases were in the hospital to help suppress the epidemic (more elective surgery would inevitably have meant more patients and staff would be at risk of catching COVID-19).

**Q. How long will I have to wait for my procedure?**

**A.** Unfortunately, we are currently unable to provide definitive information at this time whilst the true demand and available capacity continues to be assessed. We will only be able to provide a guide, based on the waiting times experienced by individuals who have recently received their surgery, and this may not be indicative of future cases. The waiting time will also be different for different specialties e.g. there are particularly heavy caseloads to work through in orthopaedics.

**Q. I have already been waiting a long time for my procedure, will I take priority over those added to the waiting list more recently?**

**A.** As explained above, we are currently unable to provide definitive information on timescales as this depends on the type of operation, the specialty concerned, demand and capacity. However, we continue to work through the waiting lists based on clinical need and length of time on waiting list.

**Q. What should I do if my symptoms change and I am still waiting to be contacted?**

**A.** If your symptoms worsen, you should contact your GP or MSG for further advice. If they deteriorate severely and become acute, you should attend the Emergency Department. Please note that both GP and Emergency Department care is chargeable.

If your symptoms improve, and you feel you may no longer require treatment, please contact MSG to discuss so that your record can be updated.

**Q. Will I need to have a COVID-19 test prior to my operation?**

**A.** You will be informed before your surgery whether you need a test or not. At the time of writing we are testing certain groups of patients. If a test is required, you will receive an appointment to have swabs taken for COVID-19 testing in advance of your surgery. These tests are normally carried out 2 days prior to surgery.

**Q. Will I still need to self isolate before my operation?**

**A.** In Phase 5, self-isolation is no longer mandatory, but we still advise you to consider self-isolating for 7-14 days prior to surgery if possible – especially if you fall into a higher risk group (elderly, other health issues or major surgery). Please see the additional information with regard to self-isolation <https://www.msg.gg/Pt-Info-Sheet-Self-Isolation-Covid-Pre-Surgery>.

**Q. Do I have to self-isolate if I am having a local anaesthetic or attending an outpatient appointment?**

**A.** No, you do not need to self-isolate if you are having a local anaesthetic or are attending an outpatient appointment.

**Q. I am travelling off-island for an outpatient appointment/inpatient admission, do I have to self-isolate?**

**A.** You should have received information regarding self-isolation from your off-island hospital and you should follow this advice as requirements can differ from hospital to hospital.

**Q. If I go private will I be operated on earlier?**

**A.** Private options for the provision of healthcare are available to individuals who wish to access them and such a decision is ultimately patient choice. The MSG can offer private healthcare options and individuals should access such services directly, or through their separate insurance. Waiting times will differ depending on the route for healthcare provision chosen by the patient.

**Q. If I see another Consultant, will I be operated on earlier?**

**A.** This would firstly depend on the specialty of care you are under and the type of procedure you require. Whilst the capacity in theatre continues to improve, it is not yet back to pre COVID-19 capacity levels, mostly due to staffing challenges. There is also an increased

number of patients requiring surgery as outpatient clinics continued throughout the pandemic. It is therefore unlikely that a different Consultant would be able to perform your surgery any earlier.

**Q. What is the MSG/HSC doing about decreasing the waiting times?**

**A.** The pandemic response impacted all healthcare services provided across the entire Bailiwick and the impact of that disruption will continue to be felt for quite some time. Across HSC, we are working hard to return all services to pre COVID-19 levels as we have been able to enter Phase 5 far quicker than many other jurisdictions globally. Elective surgery (and waiting times) will be the most difficult area of our services to recover however, simply because several weeks of theatre time have been lost, whilst new cases have continued to be added to the overall lists. MSG and HSC senior managers meet regularly to ensure waiting times as an issue remains actively managed. We are seeking to maximise the available capacity to provide as many operations as possible but we will only ever have finite capacity on island. We are working through challenges relating to appointing and retaining required staff, analysing the reasons for any postponements we make and will continue to investigate options and communicate the situation as it evolves. Recovering the elective backlog that has arisen will take time and MSG/HSC are doing all they can to address this issue. The understanding and support of the community and, of course, those directly affected remains paramount and is much appreciated.

**Q. Is there anything I can do?**

**A.** As mentioned above, our capacity is limited and has been impacted by COVID-19, therefore it would greatly assist us if you ensure that you attend all appointments on time, or, if you are unable to attend, you contact MSG or HSC to advise as soon as possible so that your appointment can be used for another patient.

We will endeavour to ensure that all our appointments run to time and continue to notify you as soon as possible if we need to make any changes.

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