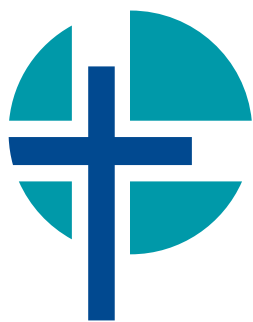


September
2020



SAINT PETER'S HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

Safely treating you better...for life.

Need Surgery? Don't Delay Care

Zero Cases of COVID-19 Transmission Reported in Saint Peter's Operating Rooms

If you or a loved one has been delaying a surgical procedure – whether elective or necessary – David Laskow, MD, FACS, chair of the Department of Surgery at Saint Peter's University Hospital, wants you to know one thing for certain: “You are putting yourself at unnecessary risk.

“We want to reassure patients and their families that Saint Peter's is one of the safest places you can be for all your surgical healthcare needs.”

Indeed, since the early days of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, Saint Peter's stepped up all sanitation and safety efforts to ensure patient safety. Now, even though New Jersey's number of COVID cases are drastically reduced from the peak of the pandemic, Saint Peter's focus on patient safety remains a priority.



All areas of the hospital, and especially the operating rooms, have stepped up the commitment to screening, universal masking, social distancing as appropriate and closely monitored visitation policies. While curtailed visitation schedules remain in place at the present time, surgical patients are now permitted to have a companion before and after surgery.

Saint Peter's physicians offer a broad array of surgical procedures for children and adults, most done through minimally invasive laparoscopic and robotic methods, in the hospital's brand new state-of-the-art surgical suites. In addition to general surgery, Saint Peter's surgeons perform obstetrical/gynecological, urological, bariatric, orthopedic and pediatric surgeries, among other complex surgeries.

Getting Ready for Surgery – Safely

Dr. Laskow, pictured above on right, said that during the height of the pandemic, many people had to put off elective surgeries. Surgeries that are technically considered “elective” such as a knee replacement or even a procedure for a slow-progressing cancer, were forced to be postponed by orders from the New Jersey Department of Health to help reduce the spread of the virus.

“Even though we couldn't take care of them surgically, we were treating as many conditions medically, keeping symptoms at bay as much as possible, until we were able to begin scheduling elective procedures,” Dr. Laskow said.

Now that elective surgeries are once again permitted in New Jersey, patients must go through a COVID screening and testing process before surgery at Saint Peter's. Roseann DiBrienza, RN, MS, NE-BC, director of Perioperative Services at Saint Peter's, pictured above on left, explains:

- Patients with scheduled surgeries get tested for COVID-19 before the procedure.
- If the COVID-19 test is positive, surgery is postponed unless medical professionals determine the surgery cannot wait.

Patients who test positive for COVID-19 will have procedures rescheduled to a future date in six weeks to three months.

- If a patient tests positive, and surgery must take place as soon as possible, Saint Peter's has two entirely separate surgical pathways to keep all patients safe. There are separate operating rooms, postoperative and recovery areas where COVID positive and COVID negative patients are treated.

In fact, Dr. Laskow proudly noted, “We have not had even one single transmission of COVID-19 within the surgical pathway.”

On the day of the surgical procedure, another round of COVID screening takes place. “Even though each person has already been tested, they get screened at the front desk upon entering the hospital before proceeding to the Family Surgical Waiting Area,” DiBrienza explained. “We take their temperature and ask about symptoms. Further determinations are made as needed on the day of surgery.”

Of course, all patients who are scheduling surgeries must have various preoperative or pre-admission tests often including bloodwork, EKG, chest X-ray, etc.

Since all patients are asked to quarantine between pre-admission testing and the day of the surgical procedure, Dr. Laskow suggested patients come to Saint Peter's for pre-op testing. Results come back in just two days, he noted, which means pre-op testing can be done two days before the scheduled procedure – less time quarantining!

Visitation

Saint Peter's policy regarding visitation of surgical patients has been updated. The Medical/Surgical Units and Intensive Care Unit allow one visitor only per day between the hours of 3:30 and 7:30 p.m. (no time limit on length of visit). The visitor must not leave the patient room or go to other areas of the hospital.

In the Pediatric units, two parents/guardians are permitted to visit their child after surgery, between the hours of 3:30 and 7:30 p.m. (no time limit on length of visit). One parent/guardian is permitted to stay with the child 24 hours a day.

Going Forward

“Surgery is what we do. We care for patients in a timely manner. Our mission is to provide care to all who need it. COVID forced us to not be able to do that for a while. It went against how we normally function.

“But, today, it's very different,” DiBrienza continued. “It's important that patients and their families realize how safe it is at Saint Peter's. There is absolutely no reason to wait and put off surgical procedures or any other kind of care.”

***“Saint Peter's operating rooms are open 24/7.
We will accommodate patients whenever
they need us.” – David Laskow, MD***

Saint Peter's University Hospital Establishes COVID-19 RECOVERY PROGRAM

Saint Peter's University Hospital launched a specialized COVID-19 Recovery Program providing comprehensive, multi-specialty treatment for individuals who were previously diagnosed (tested positive) with COVID-19.

The program offers care to those who were previously treated for COVID-19 at Saint Peter's, those treated at other medical facilities, and those who tested positive and recovered at home.

The COVID-19 Recovery Program provides expert medical care to COVID-19 patients as they deal with persistent symptoms such as shortness of breath, lack of energy, chest pain, cough, leg swelling, stomach pain and weight loss.

"We remain vigilant in evaluating the long-term impact of COVID-19, a syndrome that still has many unknowns," said Amar Bukhari, MD, chief, Pulmonary, Critical Care and Sleep Medicine at Saint Peter's. "While some patients feel better sooner, there are others that are experiencing lasting symptoms.

"To complicate matters, these symptoms can vary in intensity and duration from patient to patient; what we've noticed is that no two cases present the same," Dr. Bukhari said.

Saint Peter's COVID-19 Recovery Program begins with primary care and navigates patients to specific specialist/s, depending on their symptoms. Many COVID-19 patients continue to experience lung, heart and mental health issues during recovery while others report additional symptoms.



- Specialists participating in the program will include pulmonologists, cardiologists, neurologists and others depending on an individual's specific health issues. Saint Peter's physicians will work collaboratively with primary and specialty care physicians in the community to develop individualized treatment plans so that patients can achieve optimal health, with the goal of long-term recovery.
- Initial patient contact will be by telemedicine after which any appropriate labs or tests will be ordered.
- Subsequent treatment and follow-up will be in-person or virtual and determined on a case-by-case basis.
- In addition, documentation will be timely and sent to the patient's existing healthcare provider.

"We want to help patients feel better by effectively managing any lasting effects of the disease," said Nilam Srivastava, MD, chief, Division of Internal Medicine at Saint Peter's.

Patients participating in the COVID-19 Recovery Program can also donate plasma through the Mayo Clinic's Convalescent Plasma Therapy Research program which is being conducted at 2,637 sites nationwide. Convalescent blood plasma donations are currently being accepted through the New York Blood Center and American Red Cross.

To learn more about Saint Peter's COVID-19 Recovery Program, please contact the COVID Recovery line at 732-745-8552.

Community Calendar

For more information or to register for a program, call the contact number listed or visit saintpetershcs.com/Events. Most programs are **FREE** unless noted; please call for information.

Cancer Support

- Bone Marrow Transplant**
For patients who have had an allogeneic transplant
Call for information: 732.235.8522
- Breast Cancer**
Call for information: 732.235.7011
- Gynecologic Cancer**
In partnership with the Cancer Support Community Central New Jersey
Call for information: 732.235.6792
- Living with Cancer**
Call for information: 732.235.7557

Diabetes Education*

- For more information about the following classes, please call the phone numbers listed below.
- Diabetes Self-Management Education**
Call for information: 732.339.7630
 - Gestational Diabetes Self-Management Education**
Call for information: 732.339.7630
 - Type I Diabetes Support Group for Children and Their Families**
Call for information: 732.745.8600, x8610

Annual Public Meeting

September 22
7 pm

Register in advance for this webinar:
https://SaintPetersHCS.zoom.us/join/register/WN_vNvwa3vTta7zwYxNGfQaw

Support Groups

- Bereavement**
Call Pastoral Care for information: 732.745.8565
- Craniofacial Teen Girls**
Call for information: 732.745.8600, x8113
- Spouse/Partner Caregiver**
Call for information: 732.745.8600, x8662

Parent Education

- Parenting classes are currently being held online. Register at saintpetershcs.com/Services/Parent-Education. Once registered for a class, access information will be provided to you. For information about the following classes, please call Parent Education at 732.745.8579
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| Baby Care | Grandparents Class | New Mom Support Group |
| Birth Center Class
(for moms under midwifery care) | Hypnobirthing | Prenatal Yoga & Exercise Class |
| Breastfeeding Class | Marvelous Multiples | Prepared Childbirth/Lamaze Classes |
| Breastfeeding Support Group | New Daddy Class | Sibling Class |

SHARE 3 rd Thursday of each month. Next meeting: September 17 7 to 9 pm Irina Mariano-Brown, MSW, LCSW Email for Zoom link: imariano@saintpetersuh.com Call 732.745.8522 FREE	Weight Loss Seminar 3 rd Tuesday of each month. Next meeting: September 15 12 to 1:30 pm Kelly Del Rosario, Nurse Navigator of Bariatric Surgery Email for Zoom link: kdelrosario@saintpetersuh.com Call 732.339.7450	MyGoal Autism Family 2 nd Sunday of each month. Next meeting: September 13 3 pm <i>In-person (socially distanced seating)</i> Call 877.886.9462 or email info@mygoalautism.org for location details
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Need a doctor? To find a Saint Peter's physician, call 1.855.SP.MY.DOC (1.855.776.9362).
Also available, online scheduling with select Saint Peter's Healthcare System physicians via Zocdoc at BookMySPDoc.com
This calendar is for information only. Do not rely on it to make healthcare decisions on your own; instead, talk with your healthcare provider for advice and treatment. Do not ignore medical advice or delay seeking it because of something you read here. We do not suggest or endorse that you have any tests, use products, or use other information in this document without advice from your healthcare provider.



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