

ELECTIVE SURGERY RESTRICTIONS EASED

COVID-19 FACT SHEET

Restrictions on select elective surgeries eased as Australia flattens the curve.

The Australian Government in partnership with states and territories, peak surgical bodies, the AMA and the private hospital sector will be increasing the availability of elective surgery in a safe and carefully considered way which ensures the wellbeing of both patients and healthcare workers.

This is possible due to the strong collaboration across governments to build capacity and strengthen the health system to reduce the threat of the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic.

EASING RESTRICTIONS

Elective surgery procedures were restricted as Australia sought to secure additional personal protective equipment (PPE) and limit the number of people entering hospitals in the early stages of the pandemic.

Through Australia's strict containment measures health authorities have successfully suppressed the virus: closing Australia's borders, testing, tracing, and in particular, the social distancing and the isolation. These continue to be the strongest weapons against the coronavirus.

Health authorities have been boosting the capacity of their hospitals and have secured over 3000 new ventilators and 60 million masks into the national stockpile.

PHASED REINTRODUCTION OF ELECTIVE SURGERIES

Restrictions on elective surgery have been a difficult but important part of ensuring the capacity across the health system to manage the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thanks to the efforts of all Australians the National Cabinet has agreed with health advice that Australia is in a position to reintroduce some elective procedures.

Reintroduction of elective surgery will be done using a staged and controlled process which balances the ongoing need for the capacity to treat COVID-19 patients, while allowing hospitals to treat elective surgery patients.

Procedures to be allowed will include, but are not limited to:

- Assisted reproduction (IVF),
- Endoscopic procedures,
- Critical dental procedures,
- Patients who are at low risk of post-operative deterioration,
- Procedures representing low risk, high value care as determined by specialist societies,
- Children whose procedures have exceeded clinical waiting times,
- Screening programs.

Fast facts...

- The National Cabinet, in partnership with expert health advice, has agreed to a phased reintroduction of elective surgery procedures.
- This move is made possible thanks to successful efforts to contain the pandemic and reduce its spread.
- Health authorities have been boosting the capacity of their hospitals and have secured over 3000 new ventilators and 60 million masks into the national stockpile.