

Patient information and guidelines related Covid-19





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Considerations on Covid-19 infection and bariatric and metabolic surgery

Content of this section:

- ❖ Risk factors for developing severe Covid-19 infection.
- ❖ Diminishing risk factors.
- ❖ Precautions when undergoing surgery.
- ❖ Transmission of Covid-19.

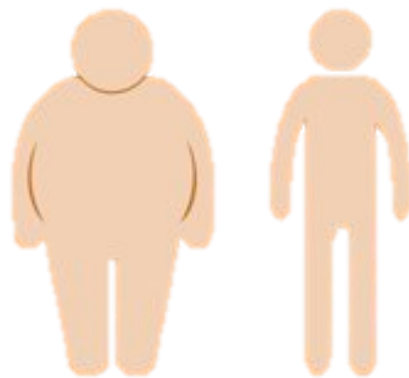


Risk factors for developing severe Covid-19 infection.

Metabolic syndrome is one of the most important risk factors for developing the severe form of Covid-19 infection, an association too difficult to ignore. In a recent study only 12.2% of the U.S. adult population was found to be metabolically fit.

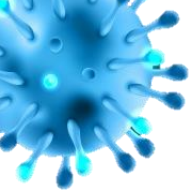
Of the patients who developed the severe form of Covid-19, 44% - 95% of the patients had at least one component of metabolic syndrome.

9 / 10 people are overweight or obese, have higher than normal insulin levels as well as abnormal blood pressure, blood sugar, triglycerides, cholesterol, sleep apnea, and other associated diseases.



87.8%

12.2%



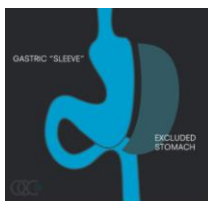
Most healthy people who become infected with COVID-19 have non to mild symptoms. However, there have been healthy people who have progressed to severe disease. We must be vigilant regardless of age and underlying illness.

Diminishing Risk Factors

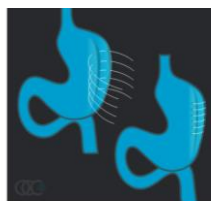
Weight-loss and metabolic surgery has a positive impact over metabolic syndrome in as little as 3 weeks.

Weight loss surgery is also named metabolic surgery for the profound effects it has over insulin, blood sugar, blood pressure, lipids and other metabolic biomarkers. Medically controlled individuals are still at high risk for developing the severe form of Covid-19. It is for this reason that certain governments are now pushing Bariatric and Metabolic Surgery as a priority for their most vulnerable population.

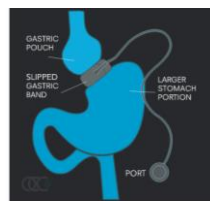
Most individuals will have markedly improved metabolic biomarkers at 3 months after surgery.



Gastric Sleeve Surgery

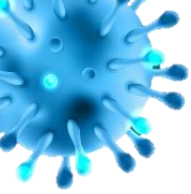


Gastric Plication Surgery



Weight Loss Surgery Revision

The most reliable way of reversing metabolic syndrome and diabetes is through surgery.



Precautions when undergoing surgery

CovidSurg Collaborative

560 Hospitals

60 Countries



Bariatric and Metabolic surgery is considered elective surgery for the moment.

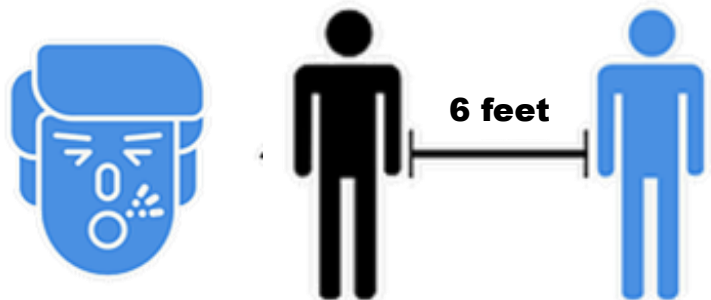
As of June 2021, most states are resuming elective surgical procedures.

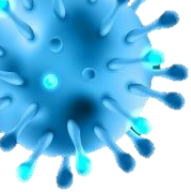
Every precaution has to be taken to prevent a patient with active Covid-19 infection or acute sequels undergo surgery.

Transmission of Covid-19

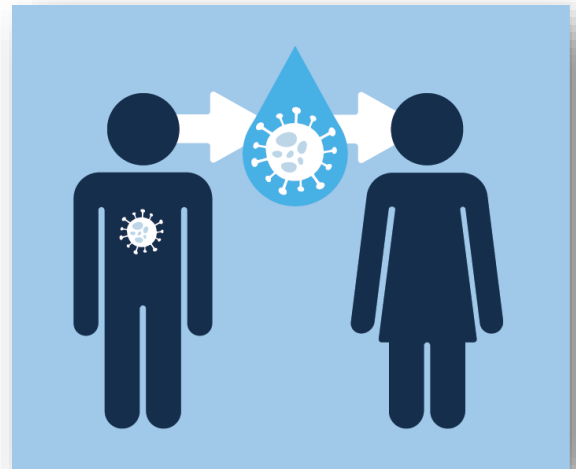
The most current evidence shows the virus transmits easily between people, most often through droplets generated by coughs and sneezes. Part of the idea of social distancing is that droplets can generally carry for only 5 to 6 feet. If you're farther than that, your chances of getting the virus are generally lower.

COVID-19 may also be spread by people who are not showing symptoms ("asymptomatic"). According to the CDC, 50% of all people with COVID-19 are asymptomatic.

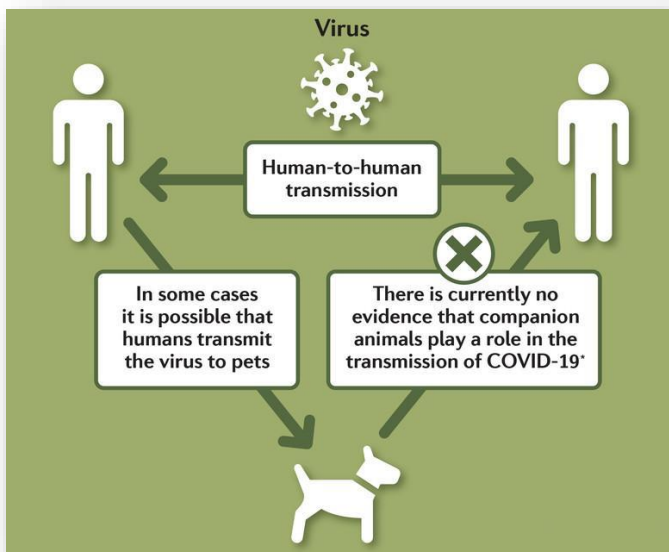




Transmission from presymptomatic people is rare. Shedding persists to some degree for 7-12 days in mild/moderate cases, but 2 weeks or more in severe cases. Based on the most recent evidence, asymptomatic transmission may occur and has contributed to a limited amount of transmission of COVID-19 infections. People can shed the virus before they have symptoms, but this is generally less than individuals with symptoms.



Recent information shows that inanimate surfaces, such as tables or railings, are not as viable as we thought in transmitting the infection, none the less we must take all precautions and wash or sanitize our hands after touching different surfaces.



Current data and information has demonstrated that the risk of COVID-19 spreading from pets to people is very low.

Covid-19 and the Bariatric and Metabolic Surgery Program at OCC

Content of this section:

- ❖ Safety measures for patients.
- ❖ Workplace safety for clinicians and staff.
- ❖ Tele-triage program.
- ❖ Patient Screening before in-person visit.
- ❖ Testing for Covid-19.
- ❖ No non-patient visitors.



Safety measures for patients

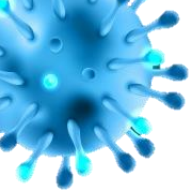
To ensure that patients are not coming into close contact with one another we are utilizing a modified schedule to avoid high volume or density.

We will limit patient companions to individuals whose participation in the appointment is necessary based on the patient's situation (e.g., parents of children, offspring, spouse or other companion of a vulnerable adult).



Please consider that Mexican sanitary law still establish the use of cloth face covering or masks as mandatory to enter any establishment.

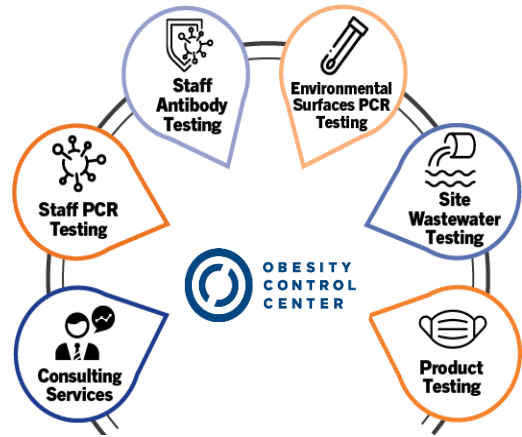
Visitors and patients who arrive at the practice without a cloth face covering or mask will receive one by our staff.



Workplace safety for clinicians and staff

All staff has been trained, audited and certified in the best practices regarding the prevention of Covid-19 transmission in the healthcare environment.

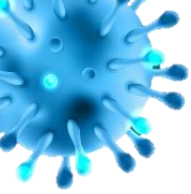
Work areas have been rearranged to increase the distance between people who are working.



We have increased dedicated workstations and patient rooms to minimize the number of people touching the same equipment.

We have increased and adapted cleaning schedules and protocols regarding shared spaces.





Tele-triage program

All patients contacting the office seeking bariatric surgery are initially directed to the practice's HIPAA-compliant telemedicine platform for pre surgical preparation and screening.

We utilize a tele-triage program to ensure that patients seeking surgical appointments are put on the right path by assessing the patient's overall health status and risk.

COVID-19 testing may or may not be requested before the patient travels to our center.

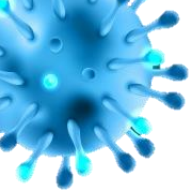


Patient Screening before in-person visit

Before a patient presents in the office, our team will verify as best as we can that the patient does not have symptoms of COVID-19. Our administrative staff will be in contact with the patient prior to the office visit to.

- ❖ Review the logistics of the travel process.
- ❖ Screen the patient for COVID-19 symptoms.

Once the patient arrives at the center, the patient will be screened prior to entering. OCC is strictly limiting the individuals accompanying patients.



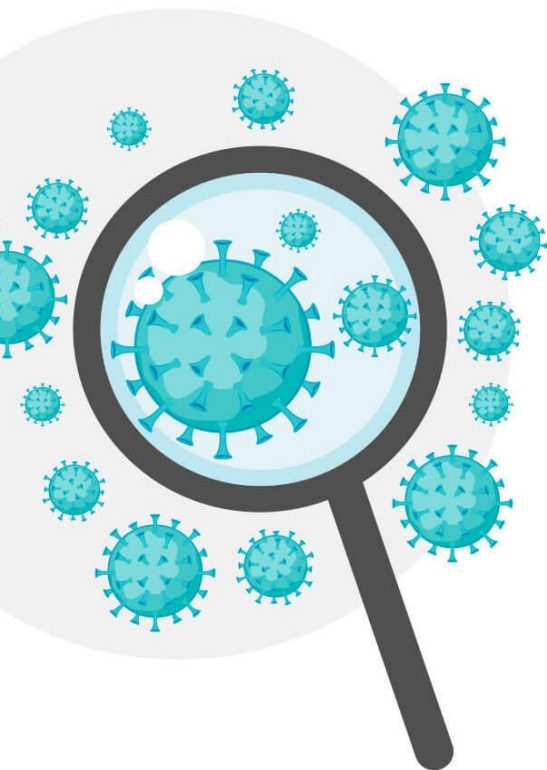
Testing for Covid-19

All patients travelling to our center for surgery will require COVID-19 testing upon arrival. We have direct agreements with several testing sites that have been vetted to expedite turnaround time on testing results.

No non-patient visitors

Entrance to individuals other than patients or employees is prohibited (including vendors, educators, service providers, etc.). This policy is clearly displayed outside our facility and in our website.

If a companion is necessary, he or she will be screened the same way that the patient.



Visitors who must physically enter the hospital (to do repair work, for example), will do it at a designated time window outside our practice’s normal office hours to minimize to the extent possible interactions with patients, clinicians or staff, and will always wear protection gear.



Enhanced Safety Program

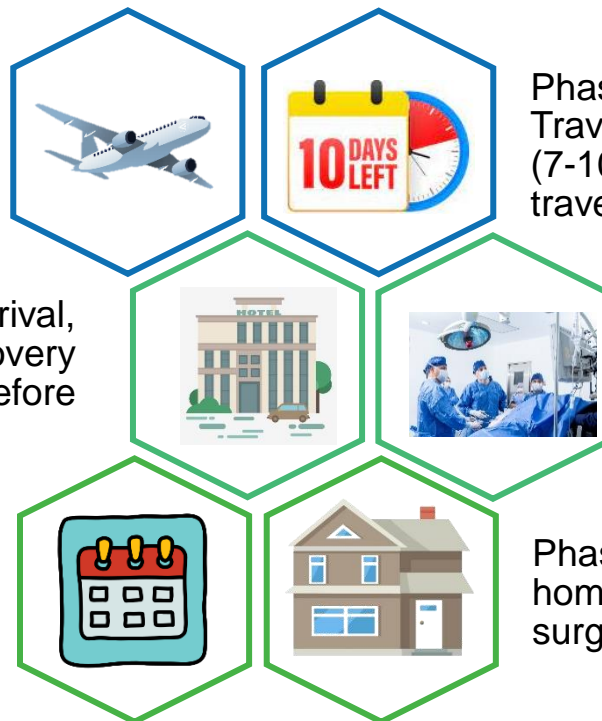
Content of this section:

- ❖ Overview of the enhanced OCC preparation and Follow-up Program.



Overview of the enhanced OCC preparation and Follow-up Program

Preparation for bariatric surgery starts 10 days before your travel and continues after you return home. We have broken down the program into phases to easily understand what is required of the patient and what measures the OCC Covid-19 program will implement for your safety before, during and after surgery.



Phase 1: Before traveling

Content of this section

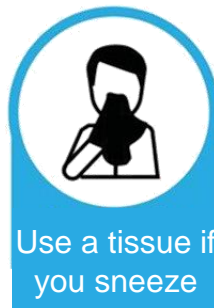
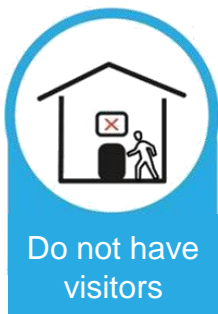
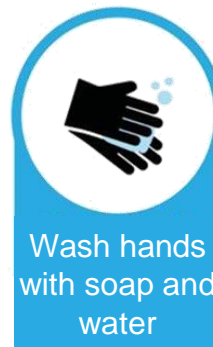
- ❖ Voluntary home isolation.
- ❖ Covid-19 testing.
- ❖ Type of tests.
- ❖ Interpreting the test results.
- ❖ Travel precautions.



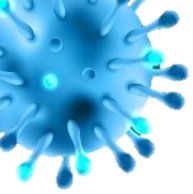
Voluntary home isolation

During this period of time patients are recommended to stay home, maintain social distance and observe all published measures to avoid infection with Covid-19, as long as this doesn't interfere with your normal activities or work.

People who are in isolation should stay home.



Social distancing, also called “physical distancing,” means keeping 6 feet of space between yourself and other people in close spaces.



Covid-19 testing

The OCC preoperative testing protocol is continuously evolving as we learn more about COVID-19 testing and its impact on outcomes. Three kinds of tests are available for COVID-19: viral, antigen and antibody tests.

Types of tests

RT-PCR

It's a test that determines an active infection with Covid-19.



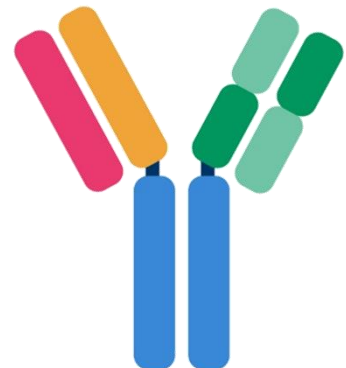
This viral test checks samples from your respiratory system to tell you if you currently have an infection with SARS-CoV-2.

The sample will be sent to a laboratory to analyze.

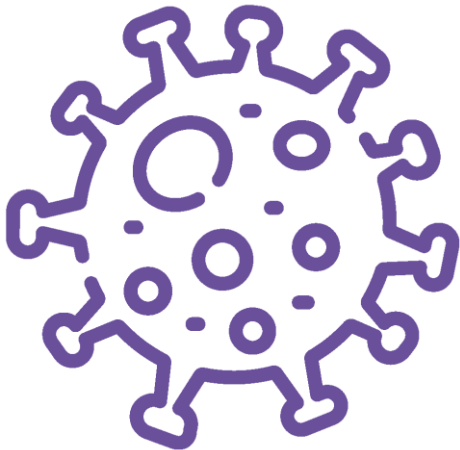
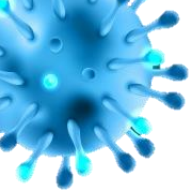
The process takes at least 24 hours once received by the lab.

It's a test that determines if your immune system has reacted to the Covid-19 virus. (you have or had the virus; previous PCR test helps determine if it is still active in your body).

IgG / IgM



An antibody test may not be able to show if you have a current infection, because it can take 1-3 weeks after infection to make antibodies.



Antigens

Helps determine the presence or absence of portions of the virus proteins that it uses to infect cells, these proteins are called antigens.

This test can be useful to identify if a person with symptoms is within the first 7 days of the illness.

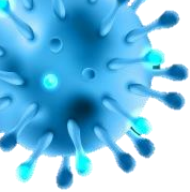
Interpreting the results

The result of any of the tests will be presented by a positive or negative mark or legend that will be interpreted by our team before your surgery.

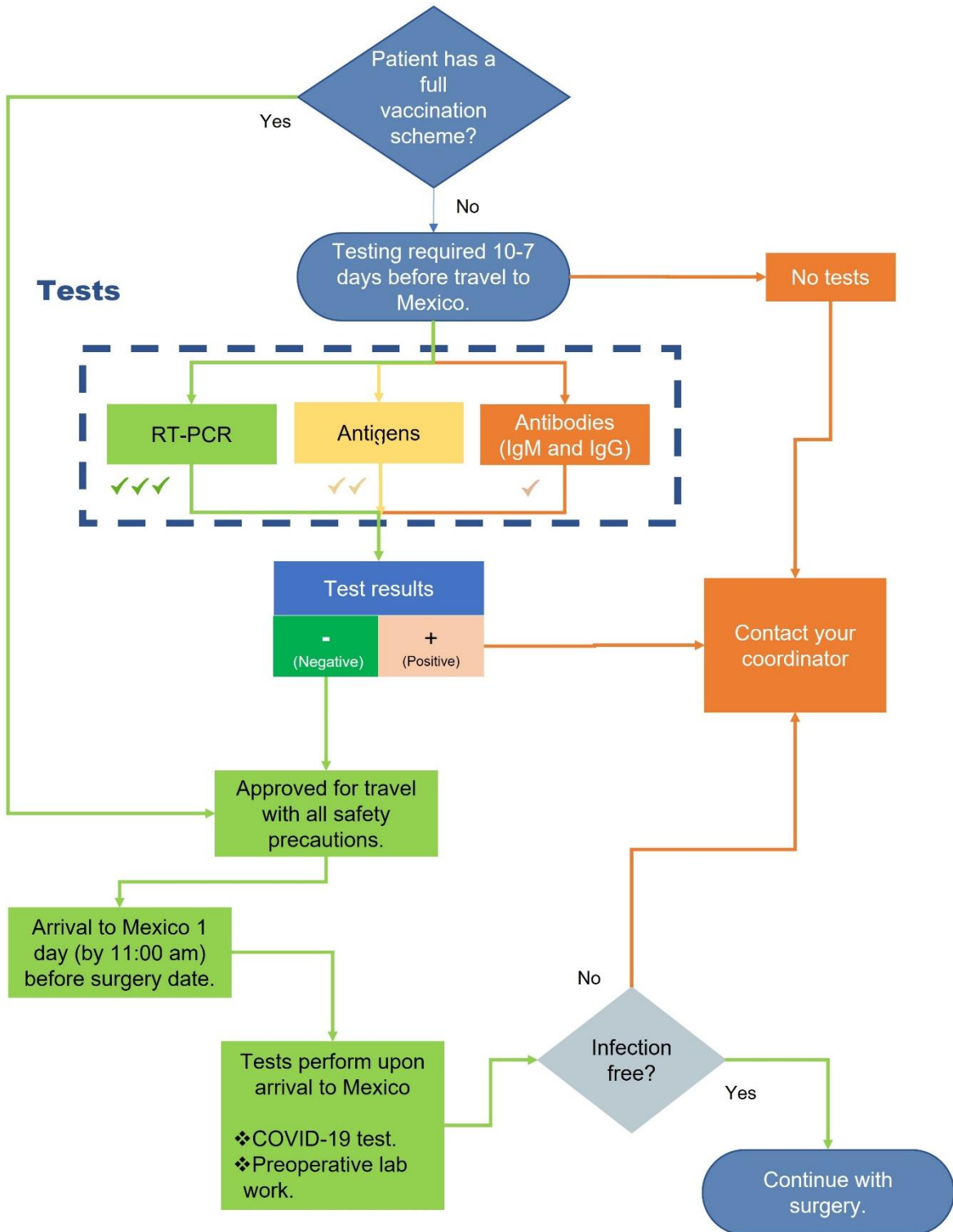
Patients without a full vaccination scheme are required to have a COVID-19 test performed at most 10 days prior to travelling to OCC.

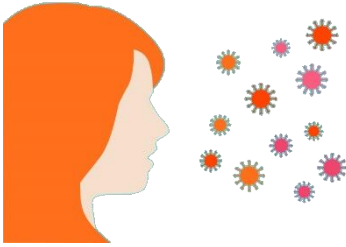
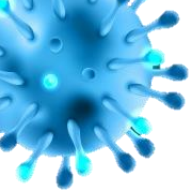
In flowchart 1, below, there's a summary that shows you the level of preference of the different tests for Covid-19, and the process to follow, along with the clinical significance and meaning of the different types of results. Remember that the final interpretations and directions will be taken by our team of experts.





Flowchart 1: testing and process to follow





You might test positive even if you never had symptoms of COVID-19. This could happen if you had an infection without symptoms (also called an asymptomatic infection).

If you work in a job where you wear personal protective equipment (PPE), continue wearing it.

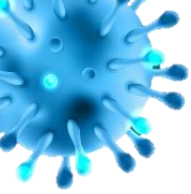


Right now the most effective way to protect ourselves and our loved ones from mild to severe sickness is to get vaccinated. OCC encourages you to get your COVID-19 vaccination series completed with any of the available vaccines in your location, at least 2 weeks before surgery.

False Negatives:

The PCR (Viral) and antigens tests can be falsely negative depending on how close it was performed to the day you came in contact with virus:

- ❖ **Day 1:** 100 % of the results will be negative.
- ❖ **Day 4:** Patients are usually asymptomatic and around 67% have negative results.
- ❖ **Day 5:** Some patients start to develop symptoms and 38 % tests are negative.
- ❖ **Day 8:** Usually most have had symptoms for 72 hours and around 20 % tests are negative.



Travel precautions

Most viruses and other germs do not spread easily on flights because of how air circulates and is filtered on airplanes. However, social distancing is difficult on crowded flights, and you may have to sit near others (within 6 feet).

Protect yourself and others during your trip according to the CDC:



Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 40 seconds specially if you have been in a public space.

If soap and water are not available, bring and use hand sanitizer that contains at least 70% alcohol.



Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.

Avoid close contact with others and wear a cloth face covering.



Cover coughs and sneezes.



Phase 2: Your arrival and stay at OCC

Content of this section

- ❖ Overview of best practices adopted by organization.
- ❖ Airport pickup.
- ❖ Arrival to Hotel.
- ❖ Testing.
- ❖ Approval for surgery.
- ❖ Admission to hospital.
- ❖ Pre surgery consults.
- ❖ Surgery.
- ❖ Recovery.
- ❖ Discharge.
- ❖ Barium swallow test.



Overview of best practices adopted by organization

The hospital and the staff, as well as the hotel and transport are all following best practices to mitigate the risk of Covid-19 transmission.

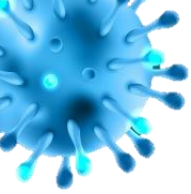
These best practices are dictated by the World Health Organization, The Centers for Disease Control, The American College of Surgeons as well as other recognized international organizations.

In addition the Hotel and transport have been certified by **PREVERISK GROUP**, a post Covid-19 tourism sector alliance, in 22 countries.



World Health Organization





Airport pickup

Our driver will be using his personal protection equipment and will have hand sanitizer, disinfectant wipes or spray available to all travelers.

The OCC patient transport van is disinfected between each trip.

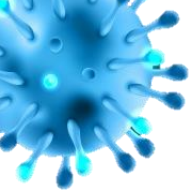


At your arrival, the OCC van will pick you up at your predetermined spot.

He will receive your luggage, spray it with disinfectant and proceed to request all travelers to sanitize hands and dawn a facemask.

Positive ambient pressure in the van will be exercised via the AC system.

All patients must arrive 1 day prior to surgery date, before 11:00 am



Arrival to hotel

Our main hotel has partnered with PREVERISK, a global leader in hotel consulting certified in COVID-19 preventive protocols for disinfection, hygiene and general sanitation.

Temperature checks, cleaning and disinfecting upon arrival, and luggage.

All team members will be equipped with mask and face shields.



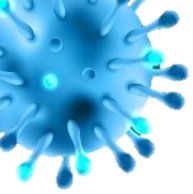
Acrylic shields will be placed at the front desk.

Hotel will accommodate OCC Patients on 1 floor to reduce interaction with other guests.

Cleaning and disinfection protocols every 2 hours for high-touch areas and points.

All patients will be transported directly to the Hotel.

Limited number of patients will be transported at a time to ensure social distancing.

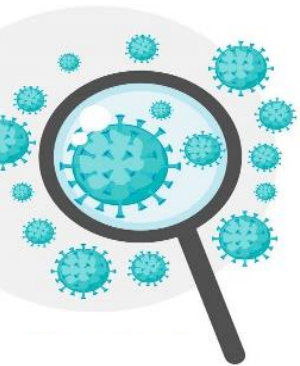


Testing

All patients will be required to have COVID-19 testing done upon arrival date (see page 16).

Arrival date. Lab Test: Covid-19 (nasal swab) and blood (preoperative lab work) samples will be taken at the hotel.

The hotel will call your room when the lab arrives for testing.

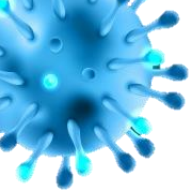


The laboratory personnel will arrive at a predetermined time and proceed to take the samples for the required tests. All personal protection equipment and safety measures will be taken any time you are in contact with healthcare personnel.

Approval for surgery

Once we have your results, we will contact you and discuss them and proceed accordingly.

We expect most test to be negative.



The day of the surgery you will be taken to the hospital, (no companions).



You will remain in the same room during your hospital stay.

You will be admitted directly into your hospital suite. where all the physical preoperative evaluation will be done.

During your stay you will be required to wear a face mask at all times.

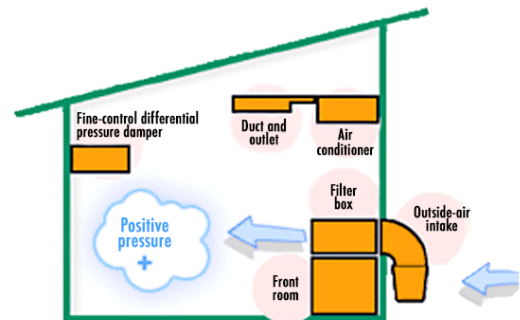


Admission to hospital

Hospital Environment

Our facility is closed to the general public. Only OCC personnel have access and is fully vaccinated. The facility has been redesigned to create a positive pressure environment redirecting airflows to help prevent transmission.

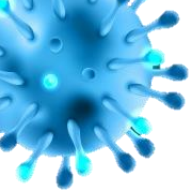
Our HVAC system is designed to pressurize our hospital suites and produce an airflow that passes through High Density HEPA filters (N95).



All medical equipment is sanitized between patients and when possible, disposable equipment is used.

Your room will be sanitized with a high level process of disinfection.





Healthcare Personnel

All OCC Staff have completed their COVID-19 vaccination scheme and follow safety measures established by our medical director.



You will be admitted directly into your hospital suite.



You will consult with our medical team before surgery.



We follow all CDC, JCI and SRC guidelines.



Rigorous screening of patients and employees.



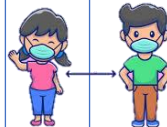
Rigorous adherence to hand hygiene at all times.



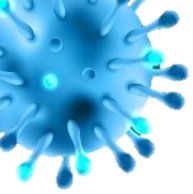
All staff interacting with patients will wear face masks.



All patients are required to wear a face covering when entering the facility.



Spaced seating and check in to ensure adequate distancing (6ft).



Pre surgery consults

Questions related to Covid-19 symptoms and your medical background will be addressed.

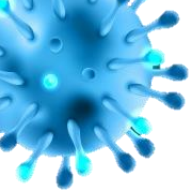
Dedicated clinical staff will be assigned to physically assess patients.

Preoperative evaluation will be completed at your room.

Vital signs measurement and an electrocardiogram will be performed as standard cardiovascular evaluation.

All equipment will be disinfected before touching patients.





Surgery

General Safety Measures

Limiting the number of medical personnel in the operating room at the time of surgery, with no personnel rotation during the procedure.



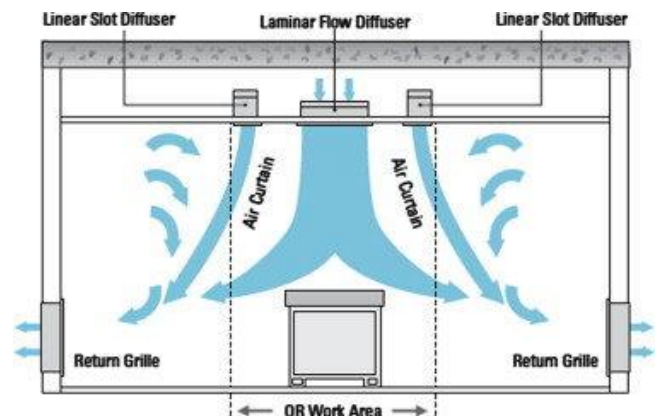
Epidemiology and Quality Department's constant and strict monitoring of the Covid-19 safety protocols.



OR Protection Equipment
3M NIOSH certified N95 mask, double protection clothing and surgical gloves.

Operating Room Environment

Operating room with a negative air pressure system (this system seals the airflow through the extraction vents that are low in the OR walls, preventing any aerosol particles from staying suspended in the air).





Medical Devices and Equipment

Eliminate patient particle or aerosol emissions generated by the laparoscopic procedure with use of particle sealed gas/air evacuation systems.

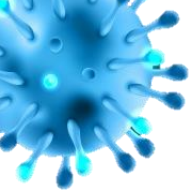
Surgical Technique

We are using the latest technology in laparoscopic insufflation, smoke evacuation and filtration. This will keep our operating room staff and environment free of contaminants.

Use of technologically advanced dissecting instruments that do not generate vapor fumes.



We will be performing the procedure with low abdominal pressure to avoid any air leaks from the abdominal cavity that could result in air suspended body fluid particles.



Recovery

Immediately after your surgery is over, recovery will take place in the hospital suite where our team will closely evaluate the immediate post surgical phase to full recovery.

Face masks will be required for all patients during their entire stay at OCC, specially when leaving the room.



Discharge

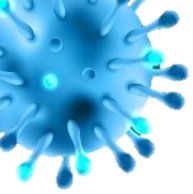
Written discharge orders, medicine scripts and important discharge information packet will be given to the patient before discharge while still in their room.

Patients will remain in their suite until transportation is ready to transport them back to the hotel or airport.



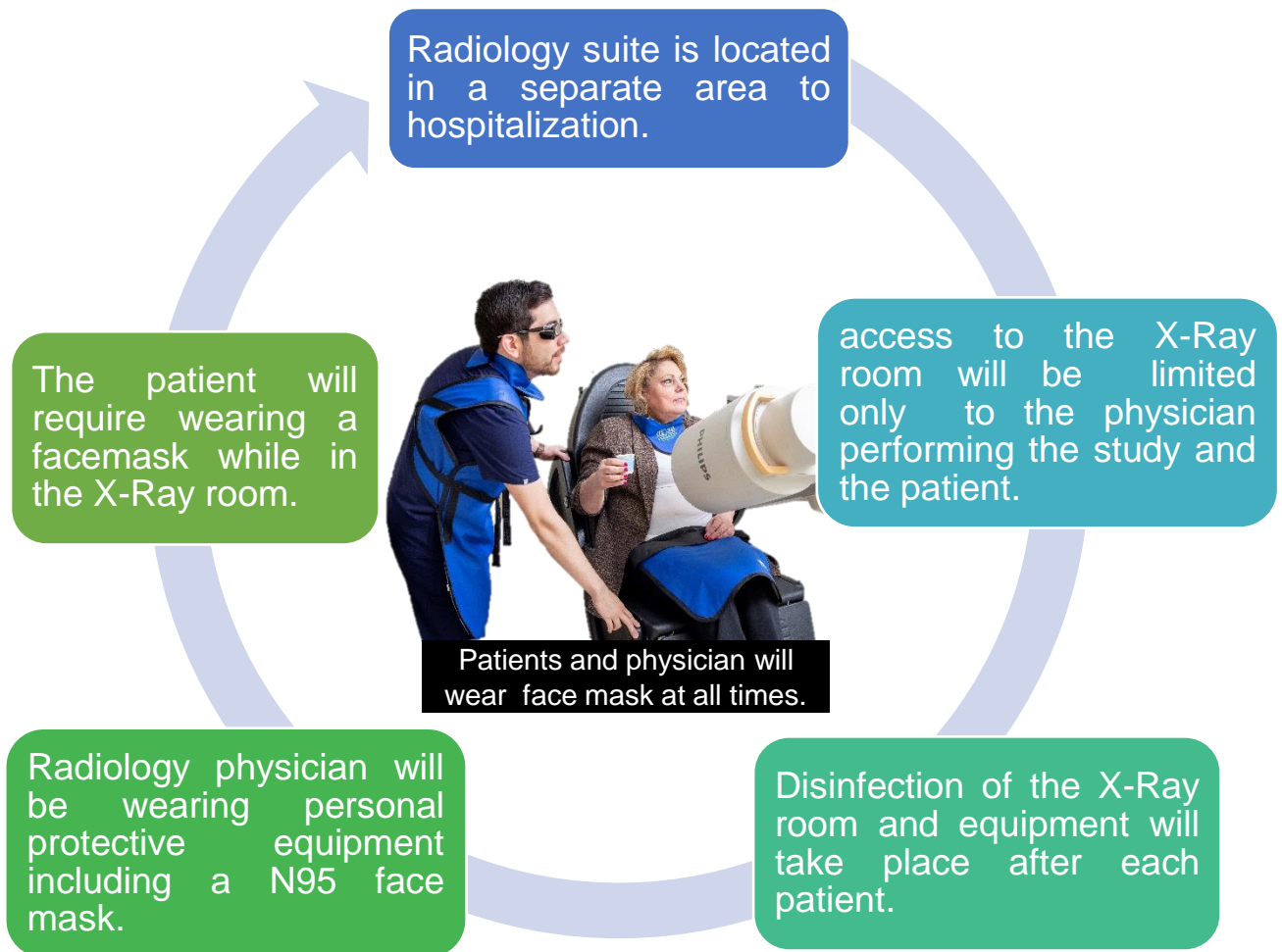
All patients are urged to notify OCC doctors of any symptoms developed after surgery including fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, acute muscle pain, intense sore throat, new loss of taste or smell, severe nausea & vomiting, diarrhea for further evaluation.

Emergency contact information with our 24/7 physician team is clearly marked in all the paperwork.



Barium swallow test

Imaging and radiology studies (fluoroscopic imaging) is an essential part of the immediate post surgical follow up protocol and is an essential step in completing the necessary studies before final approval to travel back home. Our facility has implemented these additional steps for patient safety:



Phase 3: Return back home and full recovery

Content of this section

- ❖ Return trip.
- ❖ Voluntary home isolation.
- ❖ Covid-19 testing.



Return trip

Exercise all travel precautions mentioned in Phase 2 section of this document.

Follow all the guidelines and recommendations mentioned in your post surgical instruction package.

Follow any specific indications given to you by our team of physicians.

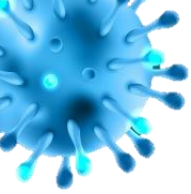
Voluntary home isolation

Take your temperature with a thermometer two times a day and monitor for fever. Also watch for coughs or trouble breathing.

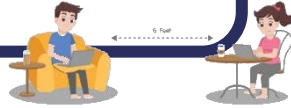


Stay home and avoid contact with others. Do not go to work or school.





Keep your distance from others (about 6 feet or 2 meters).



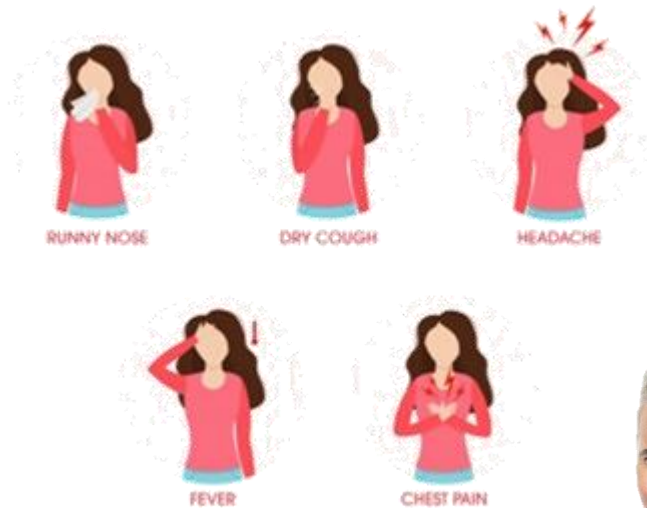
Do not take public transportation, taxis, or ride-shares.



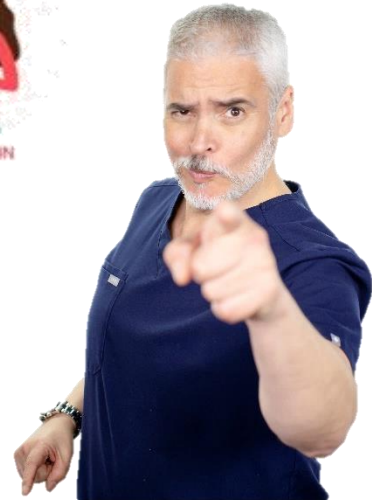
Covid-19 testing

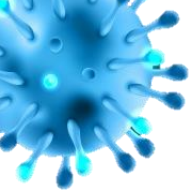
The CDC recommends that some and not all individuals get tested in certain circumstances. Because you have undergone surgery, it is highly recommended that you get tested and seek immediate medical attention if you experience Covid-19 symptoms.

CDC has guidance for who should be tested, but decisions about testing are made by state and local or external authorities.



If you have symptoms of COVID-19 and want to get tested, call your healthcare provider first.





Additional resources



World Health Organization

www.who.int



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Center for disease control

www.cdc.gov

American college of surgeons

www.facs.org



American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery

www.asmb.org



Government of Mexico (Spanish)

www.coronavirus.gob.mx



Government of Baja California (Spanish)
www.bajacalifornia.gob.mx



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