



# NORTHWEST EYE SURGEONS OF SEATTLE

## PREPARING TO HAVE SURGERY DURING THE TIME OF COVID-19

### The Office Visit

Q: What can I expect when I arrive for my appointment in terms of COVID-19 protective measures?

A: We have implemented many protective measures regarding patient, staff and visitor safety which include the following:

- Employee, patient and visitor screening for COVID-19 & temp taken upon entry to clinic
- Masks or face coverings to be worn by all persons entering our facilities per Governor's mandate ([linked here](#)).
- Socially distanced waiting rooms (less chairs, less people)
- No visitors unless needed for appointment (ex. interpreter, caregiver, parent with child)
- Extra cleaning of common spaces/high touch areas during day and between patient uses

**Q: Can I wait inside my car when I arrive for the office visit, or do I have to come inside to check in? If so, what safety measures are in place for check-in?**

A: Please arrive at your scheduled appointment time. If you arrive early we do ask that you wait outside or in your car until your scheduled appointment time as we have reduced seating in the waiting rooms to accommodate social distancing.

**Q: Can my insurance coverage be confirmed before I check in by telephone or computer? Or do I have to meet with a staff member on-site?**

A: We are referral based so your insurance has most likely been verified already when your appointment was made. It is still a good idea to please bring your insurance card with you to all appointments for verification purposes.

**Q: Will I be with others in a waiting room, or will I be kept in a room away from other patients?**

A: Our waiting rooms have been redesigned to reflect social distancing of at least 6 feet between patients.

**Q: Will I ride in an elevator? Is there an elevator policy? How frequently are the elevators cleaned?**

A: For our offices that are not located on the ground floor, there are elevators as well as stairs for use. Most of the offices are located in shared-use buildings with other medical offices who have contracted cleaning and janitorial services.

**Q: Do I need to wear a mask? Will all other patients and staff at the surgeon's office wear masks?**

A: Yes, and yes. Face coverings are required in all public indoor spaces (and outdoors when you cannot remain 6 feet apart) per Governor Inslee's order, which was effective as of July 7, 2020.

**Q: Will there be physical barriers, such as glass or plexiglass, between staff whom I am speaking with? If not, will they be six feet away from me?**

A: In some of our locations there will be both physical distancing and plexiglass separating you from staff with whom you are interacting. In other locations, there will be physical distancing and instead of plexiglass.

### Before My Operation and the Day It Happens

**Q: Will I be tested for COVID-19 and have my temperature taken before my operation?**

A: All patients are screened for signs/symptoms of COVID-19 upon entry which includes taking a temperature. Patients may be tested pre-operatively for COVID-19 based on provider preference or type of surgery performed.

**Q: Will I be taken into other areas of the facility for testing or exams before the operation begins? Describe that process and what safety measures are in place for patients.**

A: Most likely your pre-operative tests have been completed before the day of surgery, so this is unlikely. If you need an additional test or exam that is not in the surgery center, all staff & patients in the clinic wear masks and social distance per the CDC guidelines.

**Q: Who are all the people I can expect to interact with at the facility? How will staff introduce themselves or care for me when**

**they are wearing personal protective equipment?**

A: For the clinic appointment you can expect to encounter front desk staff check-in, 1-2 technicians in the clinic for that appointment along with up to two doctors, which includes both a MD and OD, and finally someone at check-out. You may encounter a surgical counselor if you decide to schedule your surgery in person. For the surgical appointment, you can again expect to encounter someone at check-in, a nurse or medical assistant to get you ready for surgery (pre-op), the CRNA, and your surgeon. Staff should introduce themselves by stating their name and should be wearing a name tag as well as the proper PPE for whichever task they are about to perform

**Q: Are the staff members I encounter also treating patients who have COVID-19?**

A: No, we do not treat known COVID-19 positive patients in our clinics or surgery centers.

**Q: Are patients who have COVID-19 in the same facility as me? If so, what safety measures are in place to ensure we are separated?**

A: No, we do not treat known COVID-19 positive patients in our clinics or surgery centers.

**Q: Will I be close to others if I walk through the hallways or other common areas? If so, what safety measures are in place?**

A: We try to maintain social distancing at all times for infection control purposes as well as have all staff, patients and visitors wear masks for source control. We have also decreased traffic flow in the hallways to accommodate social distancing.

## The Operating Room

### **Q: What special precautions are being taken to ensure the operating room is safe from COVID-19?**

A: Honestly not a lot has changed in the operating room because we were already practicing to the highest of standards in regard to PPE and infection control as most OR's are required. We are practicing standard precautions as usual in the operating room by wearing the appropriate PPE at all times, practice infection control, and have increased the social distancing of both staff and patients. In addition to our standard OR practices, staff and patients now wear their masks or face coverings at all times in our facility.

## Health Care Facility Management

### **Q: How has the facility determined that it is now safe to begin scheduling operations?**

A: We follow both the CDC and Washington State Department of Health guidance and guidelines for healthcare facilities in regard to scheduling and when it is safe to open to our practices beyond urgent and emergent-only care.

### **Q: Are federal and local government recommendations for facility management being followed according to our current phase of the COVID-19 recovery plan? If so, how?**

A: Yes. We follow the state and local healthcare jurisdiction recommendations, as well as the state emergency preparedness recommendations for facility management regarding phasing.

### **Q: How is the facility disinfected, and if so how often?**

A: The surgery center is disinfected according to CDC protocols and the building is disinfected according to state protocols. The clinic rooms are disinfected in between patients, as are the waiting rooms.

### **Q: Is everyone who works at the facility having their temperatures taken and being tested for COVID-19? If so, how often?**

A: Upon entry, everyone is screened for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and temperatures are taken. Staff is not routinely tested for COVID-19 unless they are out with signs or symptoms of COVID-19 in which case they are to follow the Return-to-Work Criteria for Healthcare Workers from the CDC which includes being tested for COVID-19.

### **Q: Does the facility have enough personal protective equipment for staff?**

A: In order to have enough PPE, we have implemented extended use for masks which means our surgical employees put on a new face mask in the morning and wear it all day. Currently we have enough other PPE to use as we would normally.

## After the Operation

### **Q: How will I receive food, if I stay overnight? How is the food prepared?**

A: We do not have overnight stays for patients in any of our surgery centers.

### **Q: As I recover, will having this procedure put me at a higher risk of getting COVID-19? Why or why not?**

A: Minimal risk as ophthalmic procedures are minimally invasive.

**Q: Can I have visitors while I recover? If so, how will they be protected while visiting me?**

A: Unfortunately we do not provide home health services at this time.

A: Unfortunately visitors are not allowed in our surgery centers during this time, unless they are medically necessary to be with you. Some examples of this would be a language interpreter, a parent with a child, or a caregiver to assist with the transfer of a patient. They are required to wear a mask while in the facility as well as any other appropriate PPE for the task.

**Q: How will my family receive updates on my well-being?**

A: Since patients can leave almost immediately after their surgery is complete, patients are usually able to call family members from their own cell phone about 30 minutes after their surgery once they are on their way home. As always, if there is a concern we are happy to relay any information to family members as well.

**Q: How will social distancing impact my recovery from surgery?**

A: It shouldn't. We just ask that patients take care after surgery and follow their specific post-operative instructions and call the office if they have any questions.

## Off-Site Care

**Q: Are telehealth visits or phone calls with a member of my care team an option for me before and after my operation?**

A: Depending on the specific situation, that may be an option for you and is a discussion for you and your healthcare provider.

**Q: Can home health care services be provided instead of a trip to the facility before or after my operation?**