

Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier



Wednesday, 16 September 2020

SAFELY REOPENING ELECTIVE SURGERY FOR VICTORIANS

Important elective surgeries will resume across Victoria's regional public and private hospitals as soon as tomorrow and in metropolitan Melbourne from the end of September.

Premier Daniel Andrews and Minister for Health Jenny Mikakos today unveiled the way forward for the state's safe and staged resumption of elective surgery, in line with the Victorian Government's broader roadmaps for reopening and current public health advice.

The plan will see regional Victoria increase to 75 per cent of usual elective surgery activity from tomorrow and 85 per cent from 28 September.

Hospitals in metropolitan Melbourne will begin to ramp up to 75 per cent of usual activity from the 28 September, when they enter the Second Step of the roadmap, and 85 per cent of usual activity when they move to the Third Step.

All Victorian hospitals will move to 100 per cent of usual activity when the state moves to the Last Step to COVID Normal, planned for 23 November.

This plan will allow for around approximately 18,750 additional elective surgeries across our private and public hospitals in October and an extra 10,500 surgeries in November. We will also reinstate the elective surgery blitz as soon as it is safe to do so to catch up on the backlog to make sure we get as many patients into theatres as possible.

Specialist clinic consultations will increase in line with elective surgery activity and telehealth will continue to be utilised where possible to reduce face-to-face consultations.

Further changes will also mean an easing of restrictions for dental and allied health services in metropolitan Melbourne during the Second Step, from 28 September. This means dental services in Melbourne will be able to resume non-urgent procedures such as routine examinations, temporary fillings, simple extractions, preventive procedures like fluoride varnish and hand scaling, and dentures and orthodontic treatments.

AHPRA-registered allied health professionals will be able to see patients for face-to-face services for a broader range of treatments than just preventing hospital admission, such as for pain management or to prevent a deterioration in functional independence.

During the Third Step, most dental and allied health services will be able to recommence with a COVIDSafe plan, with some limitations still in place on group therapy for allied health.

As we move to reopen, every measure will also be taken to ensure the safety of both staff and patients including staff and patient screening, physical distancing, appropriate PPE as well as ensuring adequately spaced meal areas for staff.

Quotes attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

"We know this has been an anxious time for many Victorians whose surgery is delayed, but we'll catch up on the backlog as quickly as possible and ensure those who need it most are prioritised."

"We've acted on the public health advice and think it's safest and best way forward – so Victorians can get the surgery they need and stay safe from the coronavirus."

Quote attributable to Minister for Health Jenny Mikakos

"Victorians have worked so hard to get the coronavirus case numbers down and it's because of their hard work and sacrifices that we're now able to safely resume more elective surgery, so that more patients can get the care they need."

For information on coronavirus, please visit www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au or phone 1800 675 398