

We have prepared this document to share our policies and other things we are doing to keep you safe when you come in for a procedure. We have also provided answers to common questions.

About the Gastroenterology Endoscopy units

The endoscopy units are set off from other areas of the hospital. Only authorized employees who have experience protecting patients from infection have access to the units. It may be comforting to know that providing exceptional infection control has always been part of their work. Patients may be accompanied by one escort who is over 18 years old. The escort can stay with the patient until they go into the procedure area. Please note that due to space constraints in our waiting room, we may ask escorts to wait in an alternative location. No food or drinks are allowed in the GI Unit.

Before your procedure

Screening for COVID-19

When you come in for a GI endoscopy procedure or test, we will screen you by text or telephone call for the following symptoms; fever >100.4, feverish, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, unusual fatigue, chills, body aches, vomiting, diarrhea, nausea, abdominal pain and loss of smell or taste. You will receive a text message to answer symptom screening questions three to seven days before your appointment. Please make every effort to answer these questions; if you do not, a nurse will call you to perform this symptom screening.

Please call us immediately if you develop any of the symptoms listed above between the time you were screened and day of your scheduled procedure.

When you arrive

- Please make sure you arrive at the time and location specified on your instructions, one hour before your scheduled appointment.
- You must wear a mask/face covering in our facility.
- If you are not sure where to go, please ask one of the service ambassadors at the information desk in the lobby. They will direct you to the check-in location for your procedure.

You and your escort will need to answer screening questions again at check-in. These are some of the same questions you were asked on the text/phone. This is for your safety.

After your procedure

- All patients undergoing endoscopic procedures need an escort home, otherwise the procedure will be cancelled, **no exceptions.**
- We will call your escort to tell them when you will be ready to leave and where to meet you. Please make sure your escort is at the medical center at the estimated discharge time.

Your escort must wear a mask at all times while in the medical center or in our waiting rooms. Parking is free for the first 20 minutes.

- We will review any results from your procedure and will also give you written discharge instructions. Be sure to speak up if you have any questions for your doctor.

Preventative Safety Measures

The safety of our patients, our staff, and our general community is our top priority.

Our belief that it is safe to perform GI procedures at this time and this is based on the best available scientific evidence and on our confidence in our rigorous cleaning and safety protocols. In addition to those outlined above, these include the following:

Reducing exposure to others, especially those who may be ill

- We are not allowing anyone in our unit who is not essential to your care or to the safe operation of the unit.
- We screen all employees at our facility every day for signs of illness; we require all staff to stay at home if they are sick.
- All employees at our hospital are required to wear a mask when in the building. Those providing patient care are provided with the necessary additional protective equipment.

Cleaning

- We have always followed the highest infection control standards established for healthcare facilities. Instruments used during your procedure have always been subject to these very high standards of infection control and this has not changed.
- We thoroughly clean every procedure and recovery space between patients.
- In the current environment, we have enhanced the cleaning protocols of our spaces over and above our usual and very thorough infection control measures.
- We follow the recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); the World Health Organization (WHO); the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH); the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS); and The Joint Commission.

