

Media Release

The Hon Jenny Mikakos MLC

Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

Minister for the Coordination of Health and Human Services – COVID-19

Minister for Health

Minister for Ambulance Services



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ELECTIVE SURGERIES TO INCREASE AFTER ANZAC DAY WEEKEND

Victoria's public and private hospitals will begin doing more elective surgeries from next week, where it is safe to do so, following a slowdown of new coronavirus cases.

Minister for Health Jenny Mikakos today announced the reintroduction of more category two and some category three elective surgeries across Victoria's public and private hospitals from 27 April.

This could include IVF procedures, post-cancer reconstruction procedures, eye procedures and cataracts, endoscopy and colonoscopy procedures, some dental procedures, joint replacements including knee, hip and shoulder and screening programs for cancer and other diseases. It also includes all procedures for children under the age of 18.

The move follows a National Cabinet decision, acting on advice from the Australian Health Protection Principle Committee, and will be managed in a staged process to protect patients and healthcare workers and ensure enough capacity to treat coronavirus patients is maintained if required.

Most category two and all category three procedures were put on hold last month to protect patients and workers and preserve personal protective equipment for the expected increase in demand in coronavirus cases.

Fortunately, because Victorians have done the right thing and stayed home, we have been able to slow the spread of the virus and our health system has had time to prepare – so some procedures are now able to recommence.

The Department of Health and Human Services is working with health services and staff in both the private and public systems to assess their surgical capacity and ability to increase procedures, when it is safe to do so.

The Victorian Government's Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) taskforce will play a critical role in ensuring healthcare workers have what they need. It is expected that up to 25 per cent of surgeries that had been put on hold will now recommence.

These arrangements will be reviewed by the National Cabinet on May 11 to determine when additional elective surgeries and procedures can recommence.

The Government will resume its \$60 million elective surgery blitz announced before restrictions were put in place, when it is safe to do so. Because of this blitz, many Victorians already had their surgeries fast-tracked. The Government is investing \$1.9 billion as part of its coronavirus health system preparedness response, including new equipment and additional PPE, including 151 million masks, 1 billion gloves and 27 million gowns.

For the latest information and advice on coronavirus visit dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Jenny Mikakos

"With Victorians doing the right thing and staying home, we've been able to slow the spread of the virus and carefully resume some elective surgery."

"We thank all Victorians for their patience and playing a part in saving lives. This is a positive move but now is not the time to become complacent – we still have a long way to go."

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