



Philippine College of Surgeons Guidelines for COVID-19

The Philippine College of Surgeons have released guidelines which aim to help health practitioners in combating the COVID-19 pandemic. Since March 2020, they have released a number of digital announcements and publications. Here are some highlights:

1. **Total cancellation of cancer surgeries is NOT recommended**

(link: https://pcs.org.ph/assets/images/archives/PCS_March-15-Cancer-Commission-Recommendation-on-Cancer-Surgeries-FULL.jpg)

Experience of other countries as well as improvement of operating room protocols have led to more acceptable safety outcomes. Though there are still exemptions to this as heavily endemic COVID-19 areas still would warrant further assessment and deliberation with regards to cancellation or postponement of surgery on a case to case basis.

2. **Minimize scheduling of elective or non-critical surgeries**

(link: <https://pcs.org.ph/assets/images/archives/PCS-COVID-no.1.pdf>)

Although this guideline was published at the height of the pandemic last March 2020, the concepts still hold true to an extent even today. If the surgery is non-urgent or non-essential, then it is recommended to postpone the surgery to a later date to prevent unnecessary exposure of patients.

3. **Employ COVID-19 testing for patients undergoing surgery**

(link: <https://pcs.org.ph/assets/images/archives/PCS-COVID19-Post-ECQ.pdf>)

If feasible, testing should be implemented to prevent inadvertent contamination of surgical team as well as to avoid further exacerbation of COVID-19 infection of the patient.

4. **Wear appropriate PPE for different settings, based on exposure risk level**

(link: <https://pcs.org.ph/assets/images/archives/PCS-COVID-10-Rationale-Use-of-PPE.pdf>)

Below is a table outlining different scenarios at which doctors can be exposed to patients. These precautions ensure that there is adequate protection for the doctor as well as being judicious about PPEs so as not to waste limited resources.