



GUIDANCE FOR THE REOPENING OF DERMATOLOGY PRACTICES IN VIRGINIA

1. WHAT SURGERIES AND PROCEDURES CAN BE PERFORMED AS OF MAY 1, 2020?

Order of Public Health Emergency Two prohibiting non-urgent procedures and surgeries expired at 11:59 p.m. on April 30, 2020.

From March 25, 2020 until 11:59 p.m. April 30, 2020, the Order of Public Health Emergency Two prohibited procedures and surgeries that required PPE, which if delayed, were not anticipated to cause harm to the patient by negatively affecting the patient's health outcomes, or leading to disability or death. As of May 1, 2020, the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) recommends that all healthcare professionals refer to CMS guidelines, CDC guidelines and specialty society recommendations for guidance on what non-urgent procedures and surgeries to resume.

2. WHAT CAN YOU DO TO KEEP YOUR PATIENTS & STAFF SAFE?

Decisions to resume non-urgent procedures and surgeries that require PPE will be *specific to each physicians' office*. VDS strives to provide its members resources to protect themselves, their patients, and their staff. We have compiled some tips and suggestions from VDS Board members for your review and consideration.

- Prior to the appointment, placing screening phone calls to patients, utilizing a CDC based COVID-19 screening checklist
- Repeating CDC screening checklist and documenting contactless temperature checks upon arrival to the appointment, only admitting patients into the office who are afebrile and deny COVID risk factors
- Patients wait in parking lot and are either texted when it's time to come inside or office staff is outside acting as "car spotters" with walkie talkies to communicate with each other
- All patients are asked to wear masks. If a patient arrives without a mask, they may be given one
- Patients cannot bring anyone with them into the exam room unless it is a required POA, and in that case, 6-foot social distancing and masking must be observed
- If waiting room is used, arrange chairs to guarantee 6 feet of social distancing. Remove all reading material from waiting room and exam rooms
- Restroom is not available to patients except for emergencies
- Contactless payments – call patients ahead of time for insurance information and co-pays
- If insurance cards are handled at the office, they are placed in a small tray that is disinfected between patients
- No paperwork is completed by patients at the office
- Set up follow up appointments on the phone after the appointment, or make follow up appointments for patients while they wait in the exam room
- Promote safe social distancing by assigning fewer providers per office, staggering shifts for office staff, avoiding group lunches and breaks
- Increased cleaning and disinfecting the office per [CDC guidelines](#)

- PPE for clinical staff and providers: masks and gloves, and if possible, gowns and face shields
- Non-clinical office staff wears masks
- Some practices are rescheduling patients over 65, nursing home patients, those with cardiac or lung disease or those who are immunocompromised and/or offering telehealth instead
- Add weekend hours in order to adhere to COVID restrictions which require social distancing of providers and staff as may require a longer visit time per patient
- Post [a flyer](#) in all public spaces and exam rooms at your practice regarding COVID-19 minimum standards of safe practice
- It is recommended that every office visit note contain documentation of the COVID19 precautions that were followed during the office visit

3. PROCEDURES BEING DONE

- Prior to the order expiring, mostly telehealth and urgent visits were being done
- Now that order has expired, practices are:
 - Triageing patient list to get high risk patients back in the office
 - Performing MOHS surgery and excisions (address BCC backlog)
 - Full body skin exams and biopsies
 - Cryotherapy
- Consider screening new rashes by telehealth given the increasing number of reports documenting the cutaneous manifestations of COVID-19
- Minimize use of electrocautery; use [smoke evacuator](#) if electrocautery is used
- Some telehealth visits will continue
 - For example: acne, rosacea, psoriasis and patients at high risk of COVID-19 complications

4. RESOURCES

- [Joint Statement: Roadmap for Resuming Elective Surgery after COVID-19 Pandemic](#) for guidance on how to safely resume non-urgent procedures and surgeries that require PPE.
- American Academy of Dermatology Step by Step guide to [REOPENING YOUR DERMATOLOGY PRACTICE](#)
- Virginia Department of Health - [FAQ: Non-urgent Procedures and Surgeries](#)
- [Strategies to Optimize the Supply of PPE and Equipment from the CDC](#)
- [eVA Emergency Procurement information Related to COVID-19 \(PPE\)](#)
- The [Emergency Vendor List](#) includes vendors used by the Va. Dept. of Emergency Management (VDEM) and Va. Dept. of General Services – Division of Purchases & Supply (DPS) during a "state of public emergency".

5. CONTACT US!

We also want to hear from you! Share your story, ask questions, suggest ways that the VDS can help our members. Email vadersociety@gmail.com today!

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Nothing in this document is to be considered legal advice or definitive guidance. Each practice is urged to consult its own resources sand counsel.