

May 9, 2020

Dear patient,

We hope this letter finds you well and healthy.

We want you to know that we are working hard to take care of all of our surgical patients despite the challenging circumstances. We have been seeing patients via a HIPAA compliant Zoom account. When clinically appropriate, we have provided follow up evaluations in-person. In addition, we have done urgent surgery on several patients in order to avoid emergency situations.

Many questions remain about surgical care in the coming months, but Dr. Reinhorn is involved in several committees working to get operating rooms open for elective surgery. One thing is clear: There will be less OR time available for elective surgeries for the next few months. Patients with cancer and life-threatening issues will be given priority over patients with less serious conditions.

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, our practice had 1-2 days per week blocked off for surgery. We have taken great pride in providing the highest level of customer service including flexibility about where and when you had your surgery. Unfortunately, in the coming months, we will not have the convenience of a predictable schedule. Therefore, we will not be able to schedule patients with the same level of customer service as before the pandemic. During the pandemic, we will likely be given blocks of OR time at the discretion of the facility, sometimes with only 1-2 weeks notice. For you, this may mean short notice and limited options for scheduling your surgery. This is just as frustrating for us as it is for you.

We ask that you are flexible when offered a day of surgery and respond promptly. If you are unable to respond quickly, we will have to offer the opening to another patient. Rest assured, we are keeping a list of patients that need surgery and will keep people on the list until we have taken care of everyone. We hope this helps you to understand our constraints. Please know that we are doing the best we can to provide the highest quality of care for all of our patients.

We understand that you may be coping with significant stress due to the pandemic, and delays in your health care are frustrating. We ask that you treat our staff with kindness and respect during these trying times. We are working hard to help you and many factors are beyond our control and evolving quickly.

For your safety and the safety of our staff, we are doing the following:

- We are seeing most patients through virtual visits for the first point of contact
- In-person visits are performed at the providers' discretion

Strict safety and hygiene protocols have been developed for all in-person visits. They include:

- Patients are screened for Covid symptoms/exposure prior to appointments
- Each exam room is fully cleaned between appointments
- Patient must stay in their car until their appointment time
- Patients will be escorted by our staff from the front door directly to an exam room after having their temperature checked
- All patients must wear a mask covering their mouth and nose. Our staff will be masked as well. Please arrive wearing your own mask if possible as we have very limited supplies
- No visitors will be allowed to come into the office with the patient
- A paperless process has been developed for completing forms prior to arrival
- In order to minimize the risk of exposure to you and to our staff, we will keep face-to-face appointments brief and can answer follow-up questions through telemedicine

For patients who need surgery

- Strict protocols are being developed at each of our locations. These protocols may change frequently.
- A **NEGATIVE** Covid-19 test is required in most locations. We can provide a partial list of facilities that test patients before surgery. Your PCP's office may also be helpful.
- Your overall health is our priority. We will schedule your surgery when we feel it's safe to do so.
- To provide you with additional information about your surgery, we have established a password-protected web page specifically for our patients who need hernia surgery: Bostonhernia.com/mysurgery. Please call the office for a password when scheduling surgery.

If you have questions, or feel that your symptoms have worsened, please call to schedule a follow-up appointment. We will let you know if it needs to be in-person or can be done virtually. Thank you for your understanding during this challenging time, and we look forward to taking care of you when safe and appropriate.

Stay healthy,

Lauren Ott PA-C
Michael Reinhorn MD