

LVAD SURGERY AND COVID-19: WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

DON'T DELAY LIFESAVING CARE FOR YOUR HEART

Because of COVID-19, you may feel anxious about coming to the hospital. But don't put off being evaluated for an LVAD, getting LVAD surgery, or keeping your LVAD follow-up appointments. **THE DANGERS OF UNTREATED HEART FAILURE ARE MUCH GREATER THAN RISKS FROM COVID.** And the risks from delaying treatment of your heart only increase over time.

This short guide will help you do three things:

1. **Feel secure and confident about seeking the care you need.**
2. **Protect your heart and stay COVID free.**
3. **Prepare for a safe LVAD surgery and a supported recovery.**

HOW HOSPITALS PROTECT YOU ↙

The risk of getting COVID in the hospital is actually low. That's because hospitals are taking precautions like these:



Testing patients for COVID.



Placing COVID patients in separate units.



Mask wearing, social distancing, and handwashing.



Enhanced cleaning procedures.



Limits on hospital visitors.



Discharging stable LVAD patients more rapidly after their surgery.

PROTECT YOUR HEART AND STAY COVID FREE

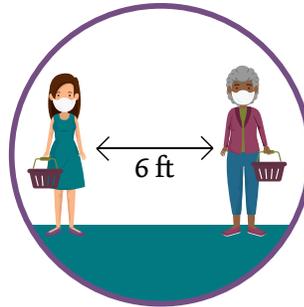
Because of your heart failure, you are at higher risk of dangerous complications from COVID. Also, you must test negative for COVID before getting LVAD surgery or follow-up procedures. For your safety, your family or other caregivers must stay COVID-free, too. Here's how you can protect yourself.



Wear a mask in public. Make sure your mask covers your mouth and nose.



Wash your hands frequently.



Practice social distancing.



Outdoors is safer than indoors for socializing.

GET SUPPORT DURING RECOVERY

If you get LVAD surgery, you will need support from your family or other caregivers. With a little planning, they can still be there for you while observing COVID precautions.



Your hospital may be limiting visitation right now. Before your surgery, find out what the policies are. Talk about them with your caregivers.



Prepare to stay in touch with your caregivers by texting, emailing, or exchanging video messages.



A tablet device or smartphone can help you feel closer to others when you are in the hospital.



Provide the hospital with contact info for both your main and back-up caregivers.

MORE INFORMATION

The full *Deciding Together* kit has much more information about the LVAD for both patients and caregivers. Your doctor can also answer questions about your specific condition and provide more advice on COVID safety.

For more information, see lvaddecisionaid.com and hfsa.org.