

COVID-Minimal Surgical Pathway

The outcomes of patients treated on the [COVID](#)-minimal pathway were evaluated during a period of surging [COVID-19 hospital admissions](#), to determine the safety of continuing to perform urgent [operations](#) during the [pandemic](#).

Crucial treatments were delayed for many patients during the [COVID-19 pandemic](#), over concerns for hospital-acquired COVID-19 infections. To protect [cancer](#) patients whose [survival](#) depended on timely surgery, a “COVID-minimal pathway” was created.

Patients who underwent a surgical procedure on the pathway between April and May 2020 were evaluated. The “COVID-minimal surgical pathway” consisted of: A) evolving best-practices in COVID-19 transmission-reduction, B) screening patients and staff, C) preoperative COVID-19 patient testing, D) isolating pathway patients from COVID-19 patients. Patient status through two weeks from discharge was determined as a reflection of hospital-acquired COVID-19 infections.

Results: Following implementation, pathway screening processes excluded 7 COVID-19-positive people from interacting with pathway (4 staff and 3 patients). Overall, 122 patients underwent 125 procedures on pathway, yielding 83 admissions (42 outpatient procedures). The median age was 64 (56-79) and 57% of patients were female. The most common surgical indications were cancer affecting the uterus, genitourinary tract, colon, lung or head and neck. The median length of admission was 3 days (1-6). Repeat COVID-19 testing performed on 27 patients (all negative), including 9 patients evaluated in an emergency room and 8 readmitted patients. In the post-operative period, no patient developed a COVID-19 infection.

Conclusions: A COVID-minimal pathway comprised of physical space modifications and operational changes may allow urgent cancer treatment to safely continue during the COVID-19 pandemic, even during the surge-phase. ¹⁾

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Boffa DJ, Judson BL, Billingsley KG, Del Rossi E, Hindinger K, Walters S, Ermer T, Ratner E, Mitchell MR, Laurans MS, Johnson DC, Yoo PS, Morton JM, Zurich HB, Davis K, Ahuja N. Results of [COVID-Minimal Surgical Pathway](#) During Surge-Phase of COVID-19 Pandemic. Ann Surg. 2020 Oct 19. doi: 10.1097/SLA.0000000000004455. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 33086321.

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