

## **Planned health care services to be temporarily limited for the safety of patients and doctors taking into account COVID-19 outbreak**

25.03.2020

**To protect patients and medical personnel from potential infection with COVID-19 and in view of the overall epidemiological situation in the country, health care services will be to some extent limited in both public and private health care institutions until the end of the state of emergency. This measure has been approved by an order of the Minister of Health, Ilze Viņķele.**

It must be noted that emergency medical assistance and acute care, including examinations and consultations which are necessary, shall continue to be provided. This means that possibilities for a patient to receive help, for example, in the event of sudden pain, are not limited.

General practitioners continue working. Oncological services, life-saving surgery, and operations which, if they do not take place, could result in disability, will not be cancelled either. Necessary assistance will be provided to women who are pregnant, to “green corridor” patients, as well as HIV/AIDS and patients with tuberculosis. Remote and online consultations will be offered as much as possible.

### **ONLY the following services will be provided as of 27 March:**

- consultations and assistance of general practitioners (family physicians);
- emergency medical assistance and acute care (including examinations and consultations);
- vaccinations;
- health care services to:
  - expectant mothers
  - “Green Corridor” patients
  - oncology patients
  - HIV/AIDS patients
  - tuberculosis patients
  - psychiatric patients
  - patients suffering from major traumatic injuries
- home health care;
- services to ensure uninterrupted therapy – chemotherapy, biopharmaceuticals, organ transplants, radiation therapy, in-patient day care services for dialysis, methadone substitution treatment, and assistance to patients requiring urgent care who must continue or complete in-patient treatment already initiated;
- consultation with specialists for patients with chronic disorders (to be performed remotely, as much as possible);
- oncological, life-saving surgery and operations the cancellation of which could result in disability;

- dental services in acute cases and emergencies;
- specialist physician panels for outpatients (in the patient's absence);
- consultations for patients with contagious skin diseases and STDs;
- acute and subacute rehabilitation services for persons who face the risk of disability or incapacitation if the service is postponed, including children who would face a considerable deterioration in their ability to function.

Neither public nor private medical care institutions will temporarily provide other health care services, including day in-patient facilities, short-term surgery and paid services.

On a weekly basis, the Ministry of Health, together with other competent authorities, will evaluate the restrictions set on the provision of health care services taking into account the epidemiological situation.

Each health care institution will contact its patients individually to notify them of a cancelled doctor's appointment or service. This does not mean that people will lose their place in the appointment schedule but the service will be provided later. Before 14 April, health care institutions will not register new patients for planned services.

The Ministry of Health urges patients to consider, together with their GP or medical specialist, which health care services could be postponed. This is of special importance to people over 60 and those with weakened immune systems, since the consequences of contracting COVID-19 could be serious in such cases.

If your health condition is deteriorating, contact your GP or medical specialist to decide on further action.

If your family doctor is unavailable, consultations on your health condition and the health care services that would be required can be received by calling to the round-the-clock phone at 66016001.

For further information on government-paid health services, please contact the National Health Service by phone at 80001234.

In the cases medical practitioners or medical institutions do not provide the above-listed services, a complaint should be filed with the Health Inspectorate by sending a letter to e-mail [vi@vi.gov.lv](mailto:vi@vi.gov.lv) or calling to phone: 67507993.