

## What to Do if Your Orthopedic Surgery Is Postponed

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused people to stay at home to prevent spread of the disease. Many hospitals have postponed elective surgeries to help ensure that their resources are available for severely ill patients.

At Bronson, we are beginning to schedule elective surgeries again. Bronson has processes in place to protect patients and staff. The practices are seeing more patients in the office. You can also do a video visit with your provider. Call the office to make an appointment:

Kalamazoo, Battle Creek & Paw Paw (855) 618-2676  
South Haven (269) 639-2866

An elective surgery is done for a medical condition that is not urgent or life-threatening. Many orthopedic procedures fall into this group. While an orthopedic condition may be painful or limit function, it is usually not life-threatening. The surgery can be safely postponed.

A delay in your surgery may be disappointing. You may have already asked for time off from work. You may have arranged for a friend or family member to help during your recovery at home. But the COVID-19 pandemic created an unplanned national emergency. You will be asked to postpone your procedure until the crisis is under control.

What can you do in the meantime? In many cases, there are treatments that can help lessen painful symptoms until your surgery is rescheduled.

### Non-surgical Treatments

Below are some suggestions for non-surgical treatment of common orthopedic problems. If you are already doing some of these treatments, you can continue until your surgery. If not, be sure to check with your surgeon to ensure they are suitable for your situation.

#### Arthritis

You may be waiting to have joint replacement surgery. This may be due to painful arthritis.

Until your surgery, the following treatments may be helpful:

- Avoid doing things that cause pain.
- Use nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) as directed to control pain and swelling.
- Apply either ice or heat to the affected joint. Use what is more comfortable for you.

Sometimes an injection of a corticosteroid into the joint can help relieve pain until your surgery.

If you have arthritis in your hip or knee, try to limit walking and avoid stairs as much as possible. If you have a painful shoulder, avoid heavy overhead lifting.

In addition, it is always good to exercise. This can maintain range of motion in the affected joint.

## Sports Injuries

If you have a sports injury, exercise or physical therapy can help you maintain range of motion and strength in the affected joint.

If your knee is unstable, you should avoid activities that involve pivoting, jumping or quickly changing direction. These actions might cause your knee to give out and result in a fall. If you have a meniscus tear, use a knee support or knee brace. Take anti-inflammatory medicine as directed to help with pain and swelling.

## Spine Problems

Even though you may be in pain, spinal surgery can often be delayed. Non-surgical treatment consists of rest and not doing activities that could make your pain worse like bending or lifting. Take NSAIDs, pain medicine or muscle relaxants as directed to help lessen your symptoms.

If you have been on an exercise program, you may wish to continue. You should let your doctor know if you notice weakness or numbness in your arms or legs.

## Carpal Tunnel Syndrome

Symptoms from carpal tunnel syndrome can often be quite painful. If your surgery is postponed, you may get relief from wearing a wrist splint at night and taking NSAIDs as directed. Your doctor may also be able to give you a corticosteroid injection. This may relieve symptoms for a short time until your surgery is rescheduled.