

30 August 2021

Dear Colleagues

This letter is from NZAPS Council to Members regarding provision of surgical services during the New Zealand Government Alert Levels 3 and 4 COVID, and follows a letter dated 23 April last year.

Be aware that there is a difference between the “National Hospital Response Framework” and National Alert Levels. Hospital responses may vary within and between DHB’s. Please follow and support your local hospital guidelines.

RACS:

RACS has released the following media statement: “*Specialist medical colleges across Aotearoa New Zealand and Australia support the temporary postponement of all non-urgent elective surgery in areas of high prevalence of COVID-19 infection across the two countries*”. [Colleges-welcome-postponement-of-elective-surgery.](#)

Level 4:

Essentially access to health care in level 4 should be for non-deferrable conditions and procedures: acute conditions, malignancy, conditions that will progress / deteriorate over a short time frame (2-4 weeks). All other cases should be postponed.

The Ministry of Health guidelines are as follows: 1. Hospitals operate in line with the National Hospital Response Framework; 2. Only urgent acute care is conducted in person; 3. Routine treatment or healthcare appointments are postponed; 4. Cancer care is maintained. [Alert-level-4](#)

Level 3:

At Level 3 access to surgical care should be for patients whose conditions will progress / deteriorate over 2-3 months. All other cases should be postponed.

The Ministry of Health guidelines are as follows: 1. Hospitals operate in line with the National Hospital Response Framework; 2. Some planned care, including elective surgery and radiology, will be provided; 3. Some non-urgent services or treatment may be deferred. [Alert-level-3](#)

NZAPS Council advice regarding resumption of surgery at Level 3:

During Level 3 COVID response, the NZAPS Council supports the cautious re-starting of elective Plastic and Reconstructive procedures for patients who are at low risk of complications, high risk of poor outcome or condition progression and high benefit of improvement in quality of life. Complex reconstructive procedures should be avoided if there is an appropriate alternative.

Yours sincerely



Chris Adams, President
NZ Association of Plastic Surgeons /
Te Kahui Whakamōhou Kiri