

# ACT Surgery Access



Information for consumers on the  
ACT Elective Surgery Waiting List



**ACT**  
Government  
Health

## What it means to be on the ACT Elective Surgery Waiting List?

You and your doctor have agreed that you should have surgery in hospital and you need to know how this is arranged.

Please read this information carefully as it will help you understand how you will get the treatment that you need.

## What is an elective procedure?

Your doctor may have referred to your procedure as elective. 'Elective Procedure' is the term given to all non-emergency procedures. This does not mean that your surgery is not important. Your health and wellbeing will always be a priority.



## Why do some patients wait longer than others?

The surgeon allocates you a clinical priority category which is based on your condition at the time of your consultation. This category determines the approximate waiting time for admission to hospital and ensures priority is given to patients who are most in need of treatment. The time patients wait for their procedure is determined by this clinical priority category.

While every attempt will be made for you to have your procedure under the care of the referring surgeon, the hospital is committed to providing your surgery within the clinically recommended timeframe, which may involve referring you to another doctor or hospital in the ACT.

## What is a clinical priority category?

Clinical priority categories:

### **Category 1**

Procedures that are clinically indicated within 30 days.

### **Category 2**

Procedures that are clinically indicated within 90 days.

### **Category 3**

Procedures that are clinically indicated within 365 days.

The hospital makes every attempt to treat you in the timeframes recommended by your surgeon, but public hospitals must give priority to emergency patients.

## What happens now?

We will contact you from time to time to check that you still need your procedure.

We will try to give you at least four weeks notice before you need to come to hospital, unless you have agreed to have your procedure performed at short notice.

Sometimes it is necessary to delay booked surgery to make way for life-threatening cases, which are admitted through the hospital's emergency department. These emergency cases will always receive priority over elective surgery. However, the hospital will make every effort to avoid such postponements and will reschedule delayed patients as soon as practicle.

## You can help us by letting us know if:

- you have changed your address or contact details
- you do not want to go ahead with your procedure, or you have had your procedure in another facility
- you have any illness
- you are a carer and need to organise special arrangements in your absence, or if there are other personal reasons that may require you to cancel or defer your procedure.



## **Why it is important to keep your contact details up to date:**

It is important that the hospital is able to contact you regarding your procedure.

If you fail to present for a procedure without providing the hospital with prior notice or you postpone your surgery on two occasions for personal or social reasons, you may be removed from the waiting list.

## **Deferring treatment**

If you decline or defer treatment on two occasions for personal reasons or exceed the number of days you are permitted to defer in each clinical urgency category you may be removed from the waiting list.

Listed below is the total number of days for each category that you are permitted to defer treatment for during the period you are on the waiting list.

- Cat 1 – 15 days
- Cat 2 – 45 days
- Cat 3 – 180 days.





## **If your condition changes**

If your condition changes you should be reassessed by your general practitioner or surgeon.

## **Who can I contact if I have any questions?**

The Territory Wide Surgical Services Team can be contacted on (02) 6205 1157.

Other information about waiting times can be found at the ACT Health website:  
[www.health.act.gov.au/waitinglists](http://www.health.act.gov.au/waitinglists)

## **If you have a concern or complaint about a health service:**

The ACT Health Services Commissioner works with consumers and providers to improve health and community services, promote consumer rights and provide accessible and independent means of addressing complaints.

The Health Services Commissioner can be contacted by telephoning (02) 6205 2222 or by email at [human.rights@act.gov.au](mailto:human.rights@act.gov.au)

Consumers can provide feedback to Consumer Feedback and Engagement at the Canberra Hospital by emailing [HealthFeedback@act.gov.au](mailto:HealthFeedback@act.gov.au).

If you wish to provide feedback to Calvary Public Hospital call 6201 6111 and ask to be connected with one of the Clinical Review Officers in the Patient Safety & Quality Unit.

## **Notes and record of contact**

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