Naval Hospital Bremerton
COVID-19 Information & Resources

Naval Hospital Bremerton (NHB) and Branch Health Clinics (BHC) Bangor, Everett, and Puget Sound Naval Shipyard remain open and dedicated to serving the health care needs of our active duty service members, their families, and other eligible beneficiaries.

As we respond to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, we are increasing health protection measures to decrease foot traffic throughout our facilities, reduce the spread of the virus, and allow us to better protect the health and well-being of our patients and staff.

The NHB team is committed to continue providing the safest, highest quality care to our beneficiaries during this extraordinary time. As the situation continues to change rapidly, we’re providing the following information to alert you to any changes in our services and share important resources with you:

- NHB Website: [https://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nhbrem/Pages/Default.aspx](https://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nhbrem/Pages/Default.aspx)

1. **DoD Talking Points:**
   - Protecting our people has remained a DoD priority from the start. We must take those prudent measures to limit COVID-19’s spread, while also ensuring our people are trained and ready to defend the nation.
   - We ask our people to take actions to protect themselves and those around them by employing protective measures including practicing good hand washing, social distancing, and taking appropriate actions if feeling sick.
   - The Secretary of Defense has directed multiple efforts to mitigate the pandemic’s impact on our people and set the bar for precautions.
     - Directed wear of cloth face coverings for instances where social distancing is not possible.
2. **Navy Talking Points:**
   - The Navy protects its people and our people protect the nation. COVID-19 poses unique challenges to our force health protection and readiness, and that is why we need to focus efforts on mitigating its spread within our ranks and families.
   - The Navy is closely monitoring the outbreak and implementing mitigation strategies—the health and well-being of our Sailors, Marines, and their families remains our top priority.
   - The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the CDC, along with U.S. Northern Command, are the federal government leads for the response to the virus. The Navy follows CDC guidelines.
   - The Navy enforces HIPAA guidelines, ensures the privacy of our Sailors, and continues to respect the privacy of our shipmates and their families. Patient information shall only be shared on a “need to know” basis to support public health efforts.
   - Commanders of individually affected geographic commands will continue to issue specific guidance to their forces.
   - We encourage our Sailors and Marines to seek the advice of shipboard or Naval Medical Facility health professionals if they believe they are unwell.

3. **NHB Talking Points:**
   - NHB remains open and dedicated to providing the highest quality care to active duty service members, their families, and all other eligible beneficiaries.
   - As NHB responds to the COVID-19 pandemic, we are increasing health protection measures to decrease foot traffic throughout our facilities, reduce the spread of the virus, and allow us to better protect the health and well-being of patients and staff.
   - NHB remains committed to providing safe, high quality care to patients.

4. **Communication Channels:**
   - NHB is ensuring stakeholders and beneficiaries are able to access up-to-date COVID-19 information and resources through a variety of communication channels. As the situation rapidly changes, all changes, modifications, or adjustments to NHB services continue to be communicated via the following resources:
     - NHB’s Facebook: http://www.facebook.com/pages/NavalHospitalBremerton/163929576969000

5. **COVID-19 Specialty Services and Information:**

- **Drive-Through Screening and Triage.** NHB implemented expanded drive-through screening and triage support, April 2. The drive-through format follows CDC criteria for screening and testing. Everyone—staff, patient, or visitor—who arrives on base will go through the same procedure. This is a best practice across the Military Health System and in the civilian network. The drive-through is a safe and efficient way to effectively assess patients. Starting June 8, the Drive-Through Screening will be open Monday through Friday, from 0730 to 2000, and Saturday and Sunday, from 0900 to 2000.

- **PHEO Hotline.** Implemented a Public Health Emergency Officer (PHEO) hotline for NHB staff and the Fleet to call for consultative services. This is not a patient hotline.

- In response to the significant public health challenges posed by COVID-19, NHB has been methodically reducing services in accordance with guidance provided by the CDC and the Defense Health Agency. This reduction in services promotes maximum use of medical assets/resources to meet the demands of the COVID-19 pandemic, allows medical professionals to evaluate and treat affected patients, and protects healthy patients by reducing potential exposure to those seeking evaluation for possible COVID-19.

- Several strategies have been employed to ensure patients’ health care needs can be addressed despite these challenges. Primary and specialty care services are employing virtual health resources on a much broader scale, maintaining direct communication between providers and patients.

- Patients coming to the hospital for labor and delivery services will continue to have access to the hospital 24 hours a day 7 days a week. After-hours, labor and delivery patients will be directed to the one open entry point into the facility. The one visitor policy remains in place in an effort to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

- NHB has assured beneficiaries via the command’s official Facebook page of our continued dedication to providing the highest quality health care while responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Beneficiaries were also encouraged to only come to the hospital or branch clinic when actually needing medical care. Beneficiaries who are feeling well or who have mild cold symptoms are encouraged to stay home and to reach out via one of the phone numbers offered for questions or need guidance.
• We will continue to evaluate the situation and assess the need for any further actions.

6. Medical Services:

**Bottom Line Up Front:** During the COVID-19 pandemic, any changes made needed will be made to protect patients and staff, and to conserve limited resources. To date, NHB has:

• Beginning June 8, the urgent care clinic, pharmacy, laboratory, radiology, and primary and specialty care clinics will open at 07:30, Monday through Friday. The urgent care clinic will be open for non-COVID-19 related health concerns from 0730 to 2000. Patients with COVID-19-like symptoms will continue to be evaluated at the hospital's Drive-Through Screening and Triage area.

• Elective appointments for procedures and surgeries remain deferred until further notice.

• Set up a drive-through screening process for all beneficiaries coming to the hospital located in close proximity to the Urgent Care Center.

• Elective, non-emergent, and non-urgent outpatient surgeries and procedures have resumed.

• Limited hospital entry points and are screening all patients and visitors prior to entry.

• Restricted visitors to one per patient.

• Employed virtual/telehealth options for health care delivery, wherever possible.

• Maintained urgent, emergent, and acute care.

• As of April 1, the multi-service unit (MSU) was closed for inpatient services due to staffing constraints and general surgery cases are being diverted until further notice.

• Maintained 24-hour access to the hospital for patients arriving for labor and delivery services. The one visitor policy remains in place to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

• Promoted use of the Nurse Advice Line for care options for all beneficiaries, 1-800-TRICARE, option 1.

• The cloth face covering policy and social distancing protocols for staff, patients and visitors continue to be reinforced.
• All waiting rooms have been reconfigured to adhere to social distancing to include removing several chairs and placing six feet distance between those that remain.

• The housekeeping/janitorial team conducts frequent cleaning and sanitizing of "high touch" areas.

• Plexiglass “sneeze guards” have been placed in all pharmacies and the Terrace Dining Room (galley). Additional sneeze guards are being procured and will be placed in all customer reception areas.

**Acute Services:** Acute services across all service lines are being maintained. Each clinic is continually assessing the capability, need, and safety of delivering care services.

**Routine Services:** Clinical decisions to postpone routine care will be based on a risk assessment by subject matter experts in conjunction with maintaining mission readiness for Fleet and Fleet Marine forces.

**Virtual Visits:** Primary care and pediatrics clinics offer virtual visits, allowing patients to remain safely at home while consulting with a provider. Virtual visits can be scheduled by calling the clinic or via the MHS GENESIS Patient Portal.

- Naval Hospital Bremerton Family Medicine: 360-475-4379
- Naval Hospital Bremerton Internal Medicine: 360-475-4206
- Naval Hospital Bremerton Pediatrics: 360-475-4236

**Branch Health Clinic(s) Bangor, Everett and Puget Sound Naval Shipyard (PSNS):**
The clinics continue to provide needed acute care with teams offering the required appointments to support essential missions and operational readiness for deploying Sailors and Marines. Of note, the BHC PSNS pharmacy was closed before the COVID-19 outbreak due to low utilization.

**Branch Health Clinic Everett:** This clinic has limited space in the waiting area and staff at the entrance who are conducting general health screenings prior to granting entry into the facility are also ensuring the number of patients allowed to enter will comply with social distancing protocols.

Any patients who provide positive response to the health screening and unable to enter due to the limited space and need to maintain social distancing, will be referred to an urgent care clinic or emergency department. All other patients will be asked to wait in their vehicle until notified that space is available within the clinic.
**Mental Health Department:** The Mental Health Department is still accepting active duty-only walk-ins, who are triaged no differently than before, and follow-up with mostly virtual appointment(s).

SARP is now conducting one-on-one counseling, with group session(s) postponed.

**NHB Primary Care Clinics (Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, and Pediatrics):** All acute respiratory concerns are being evaluated before entering the hospital. NHB is advocating maximum use of Express Scripts for all chronic medication requests. Routine specialty referrals are being minimized, with a provider required to contact the specialist directly for urgent/emergent referral(s).

**Patient Letters:** Patients requesting letters for their employer are directed to the CDC’s interim guidance for employers, Gov. Inslee’s statement, or the President’s “15 Days To Slow the Spread” announcement. Family Medicine is not issuing letters. Patients have been informed not to come to hospital to risk exposure to obtain letters, and we have discouraged supervisors from requesting letters.

**Surgical Services:** Surgical Services will maintain services for all subspecialties including ENT, oral maxillofacial surgery, gynecology, urology, orthopedics, and ophthalmology.

General surgery services for urgent, emergent, and elective outpatient surgeries have resumed, with operational readiness-related surgeries being given priority.

All urgent and emergent general surgeries that require inpatient admission continue to be diverted due to the closure of multi-service unit (MSU).

The ENT (Ears, Nose, and Throat) Clinic's Wednesday Walk-in Ear Cleaning has been postponed until further notice. For any audiology questions, please call (360) 475-4214.

**Obstetrics:** During this stressful time, our obstetrics patients may have many concerns and questions surrounding their prenatal and women’s health care. Healthy moms and healthy babies are the largest percentage of patients seen at NHB and their health is of utmost importance as the hospital takes measures to decrease their risk of COVID-19 exposure during upcoming appointments, which include.

- Converting many appointments to over-the-phone (virtual).
- Requesting that patients arriving for in-person visits do the following:
  - Upon arriving at NHB’s parking lot, call the OB/GYN Clinic front desk (360-475-4995) to check in.
● Wait for a call-back from clinic staff who will meet the patient at the door and place them directly into a clinic room.

● Notify staff of any upper respiratory infection symptoms before arriving so they may be evaluated before entering the building.

● Implementing a modified visitor policy:
  o NHB is limiting visitors to one per patient for clinic appointments and for their stay on Labor and Delivery.
  o Recommending alternate ways for patients and visitors to interact, such as phone calls, video-call applications on cell phones, tablets or laptops, and other web-based means.

For any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact the OB/GYN Clinic staff at 360-475-4995.

**Labor and Delivery:** Labor and Delivery services will continue and patients have access to the hospital 24 hours a day 7 days a week. The only change is that visitors will be limited to one person per patient in order to reduce the risk of transmitting infection to mother and infant who are vulnerable. Labor and Delivery can be reached at 360-475-5170

**7. Clinical Support Services:**

**Physical Therapy:** NHB Physical Therapy (PT) and Occupational Therapy continues to prioritize providing support to operational forces who are due to deploy, post-operative patients, and acute appointments. PT is also actively screening other patients for home care options.

**Laboratory and Radiology:** Elective procedures are postponed.

**Pharmacy:** We encourage all beneficiaries to use TRICARE Home Delivery, Retail Network Pharmacies, or the automated phone-in system (360-475-4217) for Jackson Park drive-through service for refill of maintenance prescriptions.

For high-risk patients in need of acute pharmacy service, please consider sending an alternate person with a front and back copy of your government issued ID card for pickup at our hospital pharmacy.

Cold packs are no longer provided. All medications in a cold pack can be purchased over-the-counter.
For mild common cold symptoms, the Urgent Care Clinic will provide a handout with the items that can be purchased from local pharmacies or retail stores.

To further minimize exposure to COVID-19, the following changes are in place:

Main Pharmacy: The main pharmacy is now closed weekends. Hours of operation will be from 0900 to 1930, Monday through Friday, effective March 30. Please call the Outpatient Pharmacy Patient Line at 360-475-4425 for any questions or concerns.

Jackson Park Drive-Thru Refill Annex: The refill annex is closed on weekends. The weekday hours have been extended from 0900 to 1800, Monday thru Friday, effective March 30.

BHC Everett: The pharmacy is currently open for active duty only and only for curbside pick-up, which is located in the parking lot. Patients calling in for refills or dropping off prescriptions will be provided a date and time for pick-up within approximately the next 48 hours. Upon return for pick-up, beneficiaries will provide their identification and a runner will deliver to their vehicle.

BHC Bangor: The pharmacy is open for active duty only.

Other available options for picking up/receiving medications:

Home Delivery. Express Scripts provides an option called Tricare Home Delivery. Patients have been encouraged to sign up online or by phone. Patients should speak to their provider if they are interested in having their maintenance medications filled through Tricare Home Delivery. Existing prescriptions can be switched to Tricare Home Delivery by their primary care provider or pharmacist. Copayments apply for all non-active duty beneficiaries. The web address and phone number are:

- [https://militaryrx.express-scripts.com/home-delivery](https://militaryrx.express-scripts.com/home-delivery) and 1-877-363-1303.

Network Pharmacy: Patients may request that their provider send prescriptions to a TRICARE Network Retail Pharmacy. Providers can send electronic prescriptions and/or pharmacists can transfer prescriptions to a TRICARE Network Retail Pharmacy. Copayments apply for all non-active duty beneficiaries.

Alternate Pickup: A family member, friend, or acquaintance who has base access can pick up the prescription on a patient’s behalf from the NHB pharmacy. To do so, the pickup alternate will need to present a paper or digital copy of the patient’s DoD ID, front and back, to pharmacy staff. In order to facilitate service, the pickup alternate should
come to the pharmacy with knowledge of which medications are being picked up.

**Refills**: Eligible patients can use our automated phone line to request refills at our Jackson Park Drive-Thru Refill Annex. They can call 360-475-4217 and enter date of birth and prescription number, and then select the refill annex to pick up the medication refill. Refills can take up to 48 hours after placing orders before they are available for pick up.

**NHB Galley**: The dining room is temporarily closed due to COVID-19 and the following changes have been implemented:

- The galley is not open for breakfast
- “Grab and go” pre-made lunch is available, 1100-1230
- Staff may purchase meals from the cashier and it will be delivered

8. **Visitor Policy**:

NHB has limited visitors to one per patient and recommended alternate ways for patients and visitors to interact, such as phone calls, video-call applications on cell phones, tablets or laptops, and other web-based means.

Visitors were notified they will be asked to take precautions such as wearing masks and gowns, and washing their hands frequently, including prior to entering and upon exiting a patient’s room. The visitation policy will be flexible for families experiencing end-of-life situations.

9. **Questions and Answers**:

**Q1: Can NHB test for COVID-19?**

A1: We work in close coordination with Madigan Army Medical Center (MAMC) to have access to test kits and ensure compliance with all testing procedures. We follow CDC guidelines in determining when to test patients exhibiting possible COVID-19 symptoms. NHB is not a testing lab. While NHB does not have the ability to conduct confirmation testing, providers are able to collect samples and submit to DOD or local laboratories for testing and confirmation.

**Q2: Where can Navy Sailors and Navy civilians find more information concerning COVID-19/all-stop guidance?**

A2: Navy military members and their families who have questions regarding COVID-19 guidance or entitlements associated with stop movement should contact the MyNavy
Career Center (1-833-330-6622) or email AskMNCC@navy.mil. Detailers are ready to support all order modifications and commands should work with their placement officers. Navy civilians should work with their local Human Resources Office.

Q3: What actions is the hospital taking during this pandemic?
A3: NHB remains open and dedicated to serving our patients. As NHB responds to the COVID-19 pandemic, we are implementing additional health protection measures throughout the facility to prevent spread and protect our staff and patients.

Q4: Why is NHB reducing services?
A4: In response to the significant public health challenges posed by COVID-19, NHB will be methodically reducing services in accordance with guidance provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Defense Health Agency, and if available, by specific national medical academies and societies. This reduction in services has two principal goals: 1) Direct adequate medical resources to meet the demands of the COVID-19 pandemic, while evaluating and treating affected patients, 2) Protect healthy patients by reducing potential exposure to those seeking evaluation for possible COVID-19 infection.

Q5: How is NHB conducting this reduction of services (i.e. new hours, times, locations)?
A5: This process is fluid and based on markers of community spread as guided by the regional Public Health Emergency Officer.

Q6: What specific services is NHB reducing and will acute services remain available?
A6: Acute outpatient services across all service lines will be maintained, along with labor and delivery. Clinical decisions to postpone routine care will be based on a risk assessment by subject matter experts. These changes have been made in an effort to protect patients, conserve our staff, and preserve limited resources. Specifically, NHB is:

- Eliminating non-emergent, elective surgeries and procedures to include routine dental care.
- Limiting hospital entry points and screening all patients and visitors prior to entry.
- Modified visitor policy.
- Using tele-health options for care delivery, wherever possible.
- Implementing drive through COVID-19 screening and triaging April 2.
- Promoting use of the Nurse Advice Line for all beneficiaries.
• Employing screening and triaging tents to keep COVID-19-related patients separated from non-COVID-19-related patients.

• The multi-service inpatient unit was closed April 1, for inpatients. Labor and delivery services remain fully operational.

Q7. What actions should an individual take during HPCON C?

A7. Examples of actions taken during HPCON C to protect the health and safety of your family and community include:

• Avoid unnecessary contact with others, such as shaking hands and hugging.

• Avoid unnecessary travel, especially to areas known to be experiencing active disease transmission.

• Ensure supplies of food, medication, and other items needed for babies and pets are available to last at least 14 days.

• Prepare for travel restrictions and cancellation of public gatherings, such as school, religious, and other community activities; make alternative arrangements for childcare.

• Observe local guidance on movement restrictions and access requirements for military installations.

• Seek guidance from employers and unit leaders about changes to work practices (e.g., telework) and training events.

• Comply with medical orders for self-isolation or quarantine.

• Take everyday actions to stop the spread of germs.

The following Q&A is from the TRICARE website:
https://tricare.mil/CoveredServices/BenefitUpdates/Archives/03_11_2020_tracking_covid19_know_the_symptoms_and_how_to_get_care

Q8. What should I do if I feel sick or think I was exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19?

A8. If you have symptoms of COVID-19, have been in close contact with a person sick with COVID-19, or traveled to areas where infection is prevalent, don’t make an appointment or walk into your local military hospital or clinic. Instead, stay at home and speak with a Military Health System (MHS) registered nurse via the Nurse Advice Line (1-800-874-2273, option 1), who will assess your symptoms. The nurse can screen you for potential or suspected exposure or infection. If needed, they can coordinate a virtual telephone visit with a health care provider.
Q9: How can I reach a registered nurse?

A9: There are several ways to reach a registered nurse:

- Please use the Nurse Advice Line or call your primary care team if you believe that you were potentially exposed to COVID-19 and have a fever, cough, or difficulty breathing.
- Call your military hospital, clinic primary care team, or your civilian provider.
- Call your military hospital, clinic appointment line, or your civilian provider appointment line.
- Call the 24/7 Nurse Advice Line (1-800-874-2273, option 1).
- Send a secure message through TRICARE Online Patient Portal to your military hospital or clinic primary care team.

As always, if you are experiencing a medical emergency, contact 911.

10. Additional Resources:

- NHB:
  - SharePoint page (CAC-enabled):
  - NHB’s Facebook (@navalhospitalbremerton): https://www.facebook.com/navalhospitalbremerton/
  - NHB’s Internet Site: http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nhbrem/Pages/default.aspx

- U.S. Navy

- CDC:
  - https://www.facebook.com/CDC
  - https://twitter.com/CDCgov
  - https://www.youtube.com/user/CDCstreamingHealth
  - https://www.instagram.com/CDCgov/

- World Health Organization:
- https://www.facebook.com/WHO/

- **Navy & Marine Corps Public Health Center:**
  - https://www.facebook.com/NavyAndMarineCorpsPublicHealthCenter/
  - https://twitter.com/NMCPHC

- **Washington State**
  - https://www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/Coronavirus
  - https://kitsappublichealth.org/CommunityHealth/CoronaVirus.php