Naval Medical Center San Diego COVID-19 Information & Resources

Naval Medical Center San Diego (NMCSD) and its branch health clinics continue to serve the health care needs of our active duty service members, their families, and other eligible beneficiaries.

While the response to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic continues, providing medical care to service members and all other eligible beneficiaries is a priority. Military and dental treatment facilities (MTFs) are thoughtfully and cautiously resuming services, including routine appointments and elective procedures, as local conditions allow and in alignment with the Department of Defense’s (DoD) health protection condition (FPCON) framework and the administration’s “Opening Up America Again” plan. NMCSD continues to encourage the use of virtual care, when appropriate, and is taking all necessary steps to ensure the health and safety of our patients and staff.

As we are able to increase availability of routine and preventive appointments as well as elective procedures, health care providers will prioritize cases to maintain active duty readiness and deployability. Health care providers and specialists will also determine whether the risk of delaying a procedure outweighs safety concerns. Careful attention will be paid to local conditions and changes to the level of services available will be adjusted as required to best protect patients and staff and reduce spread of the virus.

The NMCSD team is dedicated to providing the safest, highest quality care during this extraordinary time. As the situation continues to evolve, the following resources will be used to share information and updates related to any changes in services:

- NMCSD Website:  https://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcsd/Pages/default.aspx
- Facebook (@NMCSD):  https://www.facebook.com/NMCSD/
- Twitter (@NMC_SD):  https://twitter.com/NMC_SD

1. **DoD Talking Points**

- DoD continues to support state and local authorities across the country combat COVID-19 while safeguarding mission readiness.
- Local conditions drive Commanders’ decisions to adjust Force Health Protection policies and procedures.
- We urge all Service member, DoD employees, and their families to follow proper personal safety precautions.
• Take care of one another: Commanders are instructed to do what is right to ensure safety and the health of their force. We urge all of our people to look out for one another. We’re all in this together – as we always have done, together is how we will get through this.

2. Navy Talking Points

• The Navy is closely monitoring the outbreak and is implementing mitigations -- the health and well-being of our Sailors and their families remains our top priority.

• The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the CDC are the federal government leads for the response to the virus.

• The Navy follows CDC guidelines. We encourage all Navy personnel and their families to follow the guidance put out by the Office of Personnel and Readiness and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

• The Navy will follow CDC guidance for healthcare providers. Additional reference material is available at health.mil.

• We encourage our Sailors to seek the advice of shipboard or Naval Medical Facility health professionals if they believe they are unwell.

• The Navy recognizes that there may be barriers to accessing mental health care so have worked to ensure there are many ways to get help. Sailors and Marines can get help through traditional channels like mental health clinics, and there is also mental health care available in primary care clinics through the Behavioral Health Integration in Primary Care clinics. Chaplains and non-medical counselors are also available inside and outside Sailors' units.

  o In response to COVID-19, the Navy Psychological Health clinical community has shifted normal outpatient care to virtual care across most platforms (MTF and operational). This was due to the rapidly escalating Health Protection Condition (HPCON) measures across the enterprise and the need to minimize COVID-19 spread in outpatient and inpatient mental health settings.

• The Navy enforces HIPAA guidelines and ensures the privacy of our Sailors. Continue 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.

3. NMCSD Talking Points

• Don't delay your care, we're open for business. Things may look a little different with new protections in place, this is to keep patients and staff safe.
• NMCSD remains open and dedicated to providing the highest quality care to active duty service members, their families, and all other eligible beneficiaries.

• As NMCSD responds to the COVID-19 pandemic, they are increasing health protection measures to decrease foot traffic throughout their facilities, reduce the spread of the virus, and allow them to better protect the health and well-being of patients and staff.

• The NMCSD team remains committed to providing safe, high quality care to patients.

4. Communication Channels

• NMCSD will ensure stakeholders and beneficiaries are able to access up-to-date COVID-19 information and resources through a variety of communication channels. As the situation evolves, status of the following resources will be updated:
  
  o NMCSD intranet (CAC-enabled): https://nmcsd-as-spfe05/sites/dfa/emco/EM_Coronavirus/SitePages/Home.aspx
  
  o NMCSD Website: https://www.med.navy.mil/sites/usnhguam/Pages/default.aspx
  
  o Facebook (@NMCSD): https://www.facebook.com/NMCSD/
  
  o Twitter (@NMC_SD): https://twitter.com/NMC_SD

5. Initiatives to Reduce Spread of COVID-19

• COVID-19 Call Center: If you believe you were potentially exposed to COVID-19, please contact the NMCSD Coronavirus Information Hotline at 619-532-5358. This resource is specifically designed for individuals with a potential exposure to COVID-19 and a fever, cough, or difficulty breathing. If you are experiencing a medical emergency, please dial 911.

• Drive-Thru Testing: NMCSD established the drive-thru testing site to help ensure the readiness of U.S. Navy Fleet and Marine Corps commands. Drive-through testing is done by appointment for operational commands only. Drive-thru testing is not available to the general public, dependents, or retirees at this time.
6. Medical Services

Bottom Line Up Front: Protecting the health and safety of our patients and staff and conserving limited resources are our top priorities at this time and NMCSD is taking the following precautions:

- Limiting hospital entry points and screening all staff, patients, and visitors prior to entry.
- Modifying our visitor policy.
- Using telehealth options for health care, readiness and deployment health visits wherever possible.
- Maintaining urgent, emergent, and acute care.
- Promoting use of the Nurse Advice Line for care options for all beneficiaries, 1-800-TRICARE, option 1.
- Establishing a staffed COVID-19 information hotline at 619-532-5358 to triage calls and decrease in-person visits.
- Established a Flu Tent to separate COVID-19 patients from non-COVID-19 patients.

Acute Services: Acute appointments across all service lines will be maintained in person unless they can be conducted safely as a virtual appointment, as determined by our medical staff in communication with each patient.

Routine Services: Each clinic is assessing the capability, need, and safety for resuming routine services at this time. Clinical decisions to restart services and procedures will be based on a risk assessment by subject matter experts.

Mental Health: Mental Health will continue to provide inpatient psychiatric care, acute emergency room and ward consultation, as well as outpatient services, observing social distancing and COVID-19 screening procedures to ensure safety.

Inpatient Psychiatry: Inpatient Psychiatry services remains operational. All patients that are admitted will receive a COVID-19 test and they will remain in isolation until a negative COVID result is obtained. Patients with a COVID-19 positive test will be transferred from the inpatient unit and followed by our consult liaison team.

Partial Hospitalization Program (PHP) and Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP): The PHP and IOP programs have been transitioned to virtual platforms and continue to provide rapid access to brief, intensive care for patients recently discharged from the emergency room and inpatient unit. Treatment continues to include a combination of individual and group-based care on video platforms.
Routine Outpatient Mental Health Care: Adult outpatient mental health care is being conducted virtually and telephonically. Patients may contact the Mental Health Operational Outreach Division (MHOOD) Clinic to schedule a telehealth appointment or discuss care needs.

Patients who may require in-person care are being referred to either the MHOOD for a video-teleconference evaluation or reviewed on a case-by-case basis for in-person care with protective personal equipment and infection control precautions.

Outpatient group therapy is currently being conducted virtually, at reduced capacity.

Child and Adolescent (CAP) Mental Health: This CAP clinic is using a virtual care model for all appointments, which can be arranged at the front desk.

Emergency Department Psychiatric Evaluations: Mental Health evaluations for Patients Under Investigation (PUI) or COVID-19-positive patients will be conducted through video-teleconferencing. For patients with mental health needs who do not have PUI/COVID-19 concerns, there is no change to current procedures for emergency department psychiatry evaluations and care.

Substance Abuse Rehabilitation Program (SARP): SARP continues to accept referrals for all levels of treatment and is conducting screenings via individual telehealth appointments for commands and in-person screenings for patients admitted to NMCSD inpatient wards.

- Level-3 residential treatment program remains open with reduced patient census. Those pending treatment are being triaged and initiated for care as soon as possible.
- SARP level 1, the two week outpatient program (OP), is currently providing services via 100% telehealth.
- SARP Level 2, the four week intensive outpatient program (IOP), is currently suspended.
- Continuing care (CC) for SARP Level 2 (IOP) and level 3 (residential) graduates is now conducted by telehealth outreach.

Surgical Services: Surgical Services for cardiothoracic surgery, general surgery, neurosurgery, gynecology, ophthalmology, oral maxillofacial surgery, orthopedics, otolaryngology (ENT), pain management, plastic surgery, urology, and vascular surgery will continue to provide care for patients with urgent or emergent clinical surgical conditions, including time-sensitive surgical cancer care, and active duty patients who require surgery to maintain their readiness posture.
Additionally, the operating rooms and surgical clinics have safely re-opened in full capacity to provide surgical care to patients whose surgeries or appointments may have been postponed during the initial pandemic response.

Clinics will be reaching out to these patients to reschedule their appointments for either virtual or face-to-face visits with their providers, as medically appropriate, and to reschedule their surgical procedures as operating room capacity reopens in a safe, step-wise approach.

- All clinic appointments for patients with time-sensitive clinical conditions, including cancer treatments, will continue to be honored.
- All deployment and readiness-related appointments, including Limited Duty (LIMDU) evaluations and Medical Board evaluations, will continue to be honored. Please be aware that many appointments may be conducted virtually. Patients will be notified by the clinic ahead of time if their appointment is converted to a virtual visit.
- Emergency 24/7 surgical capabilities will continue uninterrupted.

**Obstetrics and Gynecology:** NMCSD’s OB/GYN department is committed to providing contraceptive and women’s health services to our active duty servicewomen.

We remain ready, willing, and able to safely meet patient needs during the COVID-19 pandemic. While the award-winning PINC contraceptive clinic is not open on a walk-in basis, the clinic continues to provide contraception, albeit in a slightly different manner. Instead of a "walk in" clinic, patients should call first, 619-532-7082. This allows staff to provide a telehealth screening and schedule an appointment for contraception.

Our hours are Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. with no referral needed!

**Clinical Support Services:**

**Physical Therapy:** Physical and Occupational Therapy, Sports Medicine, and Chiropractic Services are prioritizing the operational forces who are due to deploy, post-operative patients, and other appointments based on the immediacy of the condition, as determined by the provider.

Telephone and virtual appointments are being utilized for all other patients to guide them through home care options. Service locations may change due to staffing constraints and, should this occur, all patients will be notified via telephone call.

**Inpatient Pharmacy:** Inpatient pharmacy will be prioritized and maintained.

**Outpatient Pharmacy, NMCSD Main Pharmacy:** Hours are Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.-7 p.m., and Saturday–Sunday, 8 a.m.-6 p.m. Medication prescriptions from NMCSD or civilian providers will be filled at this location.
NMCSD's main pharmacy is offering a drop-off service at window #1 for both in-house and civilian prescriptions. These prescriptions will be ready after two hours. Pharmacy wait times are likely to increase due to the current circumstances.

**Outpatient Pharmacy, Naval Branch Health Clinic (NBHC) Pharmacies:** There are no changes in pharmacy operations or scope of services at these locations.

**Outpatient Pharmacy, NBSD 32nd Street NEX Pharmacy:** Hours are Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.–5:30 p.m., and Saturday, 8 a.m.–4:30 p.m. Non-urgent and emergent drop-off for new prescriptions will be processed and ready for pick up the following day. Urgent and emergent prescriptions (i.e., civilian hospital discharge, emergency department visits, antibiotics, pain, etc.) will be processed and dispensed same day.

**Outpatient Pharmacy, MCX/NBHC Miramar:** the MCX pharmacy remains temporarily closed due to COVID-19. The NBHC Miramar pharmacy, a full-service pharmacy for in-house, civilian prescriptions, and refills, remains open.

- Call-in refills via Audio Care can be picked up at the pharmacy drive-thru window.
- Pharmacy hours are Monday–Friday, 7:30 p.m.–4 p.m. Due to safety concerns, patients should stay in their vehicles when picking up refills.

**Outpatient Pharmacy, Refill Pick-up Sites:** The pharmacies at NBSD 32nd Street, NBHC Naval Training Center, NBHC North Island, NBHC East Lake, and NBHC Miramar are open for picking up refills.

**Radiology:** Radiology is offering all services, however, to maintain social distancing, please arrive no earlier than 30 minutes before your appointment as seating is limited in order to ensure patients can maintain appropriate physical distancing in the waiting room.

**Breast Health Center (BHC):** The BHC is currently deferring routine annual screening mammograms, evaluations for breast pain, and routine genetic screening. The BHC will continue to see patients who have an acute breast health complaint (palpable lump or concern for abscess) that is identified by the patient or provider.

- Multidisciplinary cancer care and all previously scheduled biopsies will continue.
- Evaluation of breast health issues impacting operational forces due to deploy will be expedited.
- All same day walk-in mammography services for routine exams is currently suspended until further notice.
Laboratory: Outpatient phlebotomy is open with reduced staffing for normal hours, which are Monday–Friday, 6 a.m.-6 p.m., Saturday, 8 a.m.-noon. The Blood Donor Center is open for walk-in blood donations or by appointment by calling 619-532-6650.

Anatomic pathology services, including histology and cytology, are available to support medical and surgical services.

If COVID-19 continues to impact care and NMCSD is operating with essential personnel only, the following actions will occur:

- Main pharmacy hours will be reduced to Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.-6 p.m., Saturdays 8 a.m.-5 p.m., and closed Sundays and federal holidays, except for emergency department discharge medications.
- BHC pharmacies will be dependent on the status of installations and the ability to access base clinics.

Health & Wellness: The Health & Wellness Department is offering telehealth health education classes for sleep, diabetes education, and healthy living. Please call 619-532-7764 to enroll.

Occupational Medicine: All Occupational Health clinics are open and will complete mandated exams and urgent pre-placement exams.

Central Immunizations Clinic: The clinic is open and is now offering vaccinations to all beneficiaries ages 12 and older.

Dental Services: Dental services are closed for cleanings but are currently open for routine exams and Class 3 dental care.

7. Modified Visitor Policy

All routine visits are currently suspended until the COVID-19 pandemic is no longer a threat to our patients, staff, and community with the following exceptions:

- NMCSD is limiting visitors to one per patient and 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.
- Visitors and children under age 14 (without a medical appointment) will not be permitted.
- Visitors may be asked to take precautions such as wearing gowns.
- We ask that all visitors wash their hands frequently, including before entering and when exiting a patient’s room.
- The visitation policy will be flexible for families experiencing end-of-life situations.
• Visitors must stay in the patient’s room for the entire time of the visit. Once the visitor leaves the patient room, they must exit the hospital immediately.

8. Questions and Answers

Q1: Does the hospital have the ability to test for COVID-19?

A1: We continue to remain in close coordination with appropriate agencies to have access to test kits and ensure compliance with all testing procedures associated with patients exhibiting possible COVID-19 symptoms. NMCSD is not a testing lab. While NMCSD 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: NMCSD remains open and dedicated to serving our patients. As Naval Medical Center San Diego (NMCSD) 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: Is NMCSD resuming services?

A4: While the pandemic response continues, providing medical care to service members and all other eligible beneficiaries is a priority. NMCSD is thoughtfully and cautiously resuming services, including routine appointments and elective procedures, as local conditions allow. We will prioritize cases to maintain active duty readiness and deployability. Health care providers and specialists will also determine whether the risk of delaying a procedure outweighs safety concerns. Careful attention will be paid to local conditions and changes to the level of services available will be adjusted as required to best protect patients and staff and reduce spread of the virus.

Q5: How is NMCSD conducting the resumption of services (i.e. new hours, times, locations)?

A5: NMCSD will thoughtfully and cautiously increase availability of routine and preventive appointments as well as elective procedures as local conditions allow and in alignment with the Department of Defense’s (DoD) health protection condition (FPCON)
framework and the administration’s “Opening Up America Again” plan. NMCSD continues to encourage the use of virtual care, when appropriate, and is taking all necessary steps to ensure the health and safety of our patients and staff. As changes are made to services and operating hours, staff will communicate through a variety of means to inform beneficiaries.

Q6: What specific services is NMCSD resuming?

A6: All primary and specialty care has resumed at NMCSD. The care will include virtual and face to face appointments, prioritizing care to high risk patients and preventive care that was deferred, particularly for maintaining active duty readiness and deployability. Additionally, limited dental services will be provided for readiness exams and non-aerosol generating procedures. NMDSD will continue to encourage use of telehealth and virtual health for care delivery as appropriate. NMCSD has opened a virtual contraception clinic via www.tricareonline.com.

Note the Following Q&A are from the TRICARE website:
https://tricare.mil/CoveredServices/BenefitUpdates/Archives/03_11_2020_tracking_covid19_know_the_symptoms_and_how_to_get_care

Q6. What should I do if I feel sick or think I was exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19?

A6. 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.

Q7: How can I reach a registered nurse?

A7: There are several ways to reach a registered nurse:

- If you believe you were potentially exposed to COVID-19, please use the NMCSD Coronavirus information hotline: [619-532-5358]. This resource is specifically designed for individuals with a potential exposure to COVID-19 and 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.

9. Additional Resources:

• NMCSD:
  o NMCSD Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) information is posted at (CAC-enabled): [https://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcsd/pages/default.aspx]
  o NMCSD Website: [https://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcsd/Pages/default.aspx]
  o Facebook (@NMCSD): https://www.facebook.com/NMCSD/
  o Twitter (@NMC_SD): https://twitter.com/NMC_SD

• U.S. Navy:

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

• CDC Guidance for ships:
  o https://www.cdc.gov/quarantine/maritime/recommendations-for-ships.html

• World Health Organization:
  o https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019
  o https://www.facebook.com/WHO/

• Navy & Marine Corps Public Health Center:
  o https://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/program-and-policy-support/Pages/Novel-Coronavirus.aspx
  o https://www.facebook.com/NavyAndMarineCorpsPublicHealthCenter/
  o https://twitter.com/NMCPHC