



SCTS

Society for Cardiothoracic Surgery
in Great Britain and Ireland

Current Recommendations Regarding Pre-Operative COVID-19 Screening CT Scan in Patients Undergoing Cardiothoracic Surgery

19th May 2020

Dear Colleagues

Further to previous discussions regarding COVID-19 screening of patients undergoing elective cardiothoracic surgery, we have enclosed the most recent joint guidance from the Royal Colleges of Surgeons and Radiologists (see enclosed) suggesting that:

'Accumulating evidence clearly demonstrates that a pre-operative CT chest does not add to the detection of COVID-19 in an asymptomatic, isolated and tested patient and is not recommended for screening before elective cancer surgery'

This is an update from their previous guidance, which had recommended that all patients requiring level 2 / 3 care should have a pre-operative COVID-19 screening CT scan. Whilst appreciating that the updated guidance is for elective cancer surgery, we believe that a similar principle should also apply to patients undergoing cardiac and thoracic surgery. Hence:

Patients undergoing *elective* cardiothoracic surgery do *not* routinely require a pre-operative COVID-19 screening CT scan, if they fulfil the following criteria:

- Self-isolating for 14 days prior to surgery
- No symptoms of COVID-19 (fever, prolonged cough, loss of smell / taste, etc.)
- Negative COVID-19 nasopharyngeal swab (within 72 hours of surgery)

In certain elective cases, a pre-operative COVID-19 screening CT scan may still be appropriate. For patients undergoing in-house *urgent* cardiothoracic surgery, a pre-operative COVID-19 screening CT scan *is* still currently recommended.

We will continue to keep you informed as more evidence emerges but it is important that our practice continues to evolve, especially over the next few weeks when we will be operating on an increasing number of cardiothoracic surgery patients in the 'new normal'.

Once again, thank you for all your support and please let us know if there is anything else we can do to help.

With best wishes

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