

Script – Print - COVID -19 Leads to Uptick for Some Surgeries More Patients Seeking Cosmetic and Reconstructive Surgery

In the early stages of COVID-19, as state restrictions took hold, a segment of health care saw a significant decrease in patient volume, including cosmetic and reconstructive surgery. But as the pandemic continues, patients are now using this time to have a necessary surgery or schedule an elective procedure that they may have been putting off.

“Our patient volume was obviously down,” said Dr. Pedro Rodriguez, Plastic Surgeon, OSF HealthCare. “However, what we do in terms of our office is not only cosmetic plastic surgery but also reconstructive plastic surgery. Seventy percent of what we do is necessary. We treat a lot of patients that have very significant needs therefore the overall effect was initially decreased volumes and now it’s an overwhelming volume of patients.”

The most commonly seen cases include skin cancers, breast cancer and breast reconstruction surgery. Abnormal structures of the body due to disease, infection or trauma are also treated by surgery.

“We try to educate our patients, we try to educate the public and most of all we try to educate other physicians,” said Dr. Pedro Rodriguez, Plastic Surgeon, OSF HealthCare. “Because COVID is here does not mean cancer stops. COVID does not mean patients fail to get sick. We have to be proactive, cautious, and follow the guidelines and protect all of our patients. However, we still need to provide care, that’s what we’re here to do.”

As for elective surgeries, such as microdermabrasion, many patients are taking advantage of prolonged time at home or those who are now working from home and they are finally making an appointment. Dr. Rodriguez says many patients feel more comfortable scheduling a procedure knowing they have plenty of time to recover in the comforts of their home.

“We’ve seen a significant increase in elective surgeries, cosmetic wise. Dr. Pedro Rodriguez, Plastic Surgeon, OSF HealthCare. “Patients are finally working from home. They actually have the time to recover; they have the finances to recover. So we have seen an increase in cosmetic procedures because of those facts.”

Hospitals have seen an uptick in telemedicine visits during the pandemic. But Dr. Rodriguez says the best option remains in person visits to your physician’s office, especially when surgery is involved. Patient exams are vital and a face-to-face conversation is a good way for your physician to explain what surgery will entail and to answer any questions. Hospital staff continues to mask up, wash their hands and keep all exam rooms clean.

Whether it’s reconstructive surgery or an elective procedure, Dr. Rodriguez stresses speaking with your physician immediately with any questions or concerns.

“Please, if you have a medical condition and need care, come and see us. If you have breast cancer, please come see us. If you have any concerns, please come see us,” said Dr. Pedro Rodriguez, Plastic Surgeon, OSF HealthCare. “We are providing safe care, we are providing excellent care, and we are going above and beyond. Even though we are operating in a very difficult situation with our current COVID guidelines, we’re still providing safe and appropriate care for all of our patients.”

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