

## **Medical washer issue**

### **General information for patients**

We recently had an issue with our medical washers which impacted our capacity to perform surgery. Here's everything you need to know.

#### **What happened?**

On Wednesday 4 September we identified an issue with our medical washers. This impacted our capacity to perform surgery.

A rubber seal disintegrated in a washer and adhered to surgical instruments. Other washers were subsequently impacted when they were used to wash affected instruments.

As soon as we became aware of this issue, we took immediate action and removed the washers from service.

#### **Why did you cancel elective surgery?**

Our capacity to perform surgery was limited as we had fewer instruments on hand and our washers were out of service.

Our priority was to ensure that we could provide emergency and essential surgery. To enable this, we cancelled non-essential elective procedures from late Thursday 5 September through to Tuesday 17 September.

#### **Was there an issue with your sterilisers?**

No. This issue was with our medical washers only **not** our sterilisation machines.

#### **Is there a risk to patients who underwent surgery when you had this issue?**

We've conducted a thorough investigation and the risk of any patient having an allergic reaction or infection as a result of this issue is very low.

#### **Has the issue been resolved?**

Yes. This issue has been resolved and our medical washers have been inspected and approved for use.

#### **Are you still using equipment that was impacted by this issue?**

No. All equipment that was affected by this issue has been removed and cleaned according to standards.

#### **Are you still cancelling elective surgery?**

We have resumed performing non-essential elective surgery. We are now managing appointments through our normal confirmation and booking processes. Some appointments may need to be rescheduled so that other patients can have their surgery within the clinically recommended timeframe.

#### **What's happening to patients whose surgery was cancelled?**

We're currently working through rescheduling appointments for patients whose surgery was cancelled as a result of this issue. We're prioritising appointments to ensure that all patients have their surgery within the clinically recommended timeframe.

#### **I have questions or concerns. Who can I speak to?**

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this issue you can speak to your nurse or doctor, or you can contact our Consumer Engagement Office on 9496 3566 or email [feedback@austin.org.au](mailto:feedback@austin.org.au).

We sincerely apologise to any patients who were impacted by this issue and thank them for their patience and understanding.