



Service. Healing. Transformation.

Holy Family Surgery Center Surgeon Informational Packet-Spine

Facility and Staffing

The Holy Family Surgery Center (HFSC) is a permanent, modern, and clean facility modeled off U.S. ambulatory surgical centers. It has 3 operating rooms, 7 clinic/overnight bays, and dental and eye clinics. Watch this [video](#) for a view inside the center. Dr. Merlin Antúnez, HFSC's Medical Director, performs orthopedic surgeries year-round with the support of over 20 local staff. Carlos Claros is HFSC's Administrative Director.

A typical OR team at HFSC includes one surgical tech and one circulating nurse. You are welcome to bring your PA or MA or recruit your own OR team, especially if you prefer additional surgical assists. Your team may include other mission volunteers and/or our local staff. Local anesthesia techs are not trained to perform regional blocks. For this reason, we will recruit at least one U.S. anesthesiologist whenever possible. Honduran interpreters provide English-Spanish interpretation, as well as guidance on local culture and context.

Clinical Scope

HFSC is an ambulatory surgical center that provides high-quality, U.S. standard surgical care. Scheduled, elective surgeries are performed during normal business hours. HFSC does not offer any emergency services, surgical or otherwise. If an emergency arrives at the center, the patient is stabilized and transferred to the nearest hospital in Tegucigalpa. Procedures requiring multiple night stays or urgent second stages are generally not permitted.

No surgeon will perform any procedures beyond their active privileges in the US. In addition, some procedures (as defined below) are outside the scope of our center. Surgeons should not perform any procedures beyond their skill or comfort level in an ambulatory setting.

Specialties

Medical mission teams allow HFSC to perform more complicated cases and expand the available specialties. Most specialties are scheduled at least 3 times per year.

HFSC currently provides surgical services in the following specialties:

- Orthopedics
- General
- Urology
- Gynecology
- Ear, nose, and throat
- Ophthalmology
- Surgical oncology
- Spine

Patient Selection and Scheduling

HFSC provides free surgeries to patients who would otherwise not have access to high-quality surgical care. Patients are selected based on financial and clinical need. Most patients are adults from surrounding communities, though patients come from all over the country.

With regularly scheduled medical missions, HFSC is able to meet the demand for services. Guidelines exist to prioritize cases and limit daily patient volume. These guidelines also ensure sustainable work schedules for our staff and allow patients to travel home safely before dark.

General Medical Mission hours: 7:00am – 5:00pm (2:00pm on designated Short Days)

Clinic hours: 7:30 am - 3:30 pm

First surgery begins: 7:00 am

Last patient leaves OR: 4:00 pm

Variability in cases may require flexibility in these hours.

Surgeons typically spend 3 days in the operating room and 2 days in clinic. Seeing patients in clinic helps line up surgical cases for future missions. All follow-ups are performed by our Medical Director or general physicians.

About one to two weeks prior to the mission, Patient Coordinators contact surgeons to begin discussing the surgical schedule. Surgeons perform surgeries within their typical scope of practice and should notify the Patient Coordinators if proposed cases fall outside their current scope.

Generally, surgical schedules are confirmed the week before the mission. For some specialties, clinic patients may be added to the surgical schedule the same week. During orientation and at the end of the first day of surgery, there will be a discussion regarding the possibility of adding or removing patients. The Medical and Administrative Directors will ultimately determine the center's capacity to perform additional surgeries.

Spine Surgery at HFSC

Our goal is to return as many patients as possible to useful function and to rid them of pain and disability from readily treatable, but otherwise infrequently available, spinal surgical procedures. This translates to performing simple, quicker surgeries, such as lumbar microdiscectomies, over more complex procedures that would require focusing limited resources on more complex pathology.

The emphasis is on patients whose needs can best be met in the outpatient setting or with 23-hour recoveries. We have performed one and occasionally two level lumbar fusions, anterior cervical discectomy and fusion, along with cervical and lumbar decompressive surgeries. We have also performed spinal injections for therapeutic purposes. To date, we have not felt that lateral lumbar surgeries would be appropriate in this setting.

Common Types of Surgeries Performed at HFSC

- Cervical/Lumbar Laminectomy
- Cervical/ Lumbar Laminotomy
- Cervical/Lumbar Foraminotomy
- Cervical/Lumbar Discectomy
- Cervical/Lumbar Fusions
- Carpal tunnel and ulnar nerve releases
- Spinal injections

Types of Surgeries Not Performed at HFSC

- Thoracic procedures
- Procedures to correct Scoliosis
- Disc Replacements
- Lumbar fusions beyond 1-2 level
- Cervical fusions beyond 2-3 level

Typical Schedule for Visiting Spinal Surgeons

- Clinic on Sunday or during a pre-mission visit
- Surgery and small clinic Monday-Friday
- All surgical patients will be evaluated by the surgeon in clinic during the week of the mission or during the pre-mission visit

Type of Day	Pre-mission visit/clinic only	Full Day	Half Day
Clinic	20-25 patients	10-15 patients	5-10 patients
Surgery	N/A	2-4 cases depending on approx. length of case	1-2 cases depending on approx. length of case

Supplies, Equipment, Medications

The center is stocked with basic medical-surgical supplies and specialty packs for every procedure. Most supplies are purchased in the U.S. and transported via shipping containers a few times a year. Suture, hardware, and implants are mostly donated, and inventory is limited. We recommend bringing donations of your preferred items. You may also wish to bring your preferred surgical gloves and masks.

If you plan to bring any supplies or medications with you and/or to solicit vendors for any donations, please contact medicalmissions@oneworldsurgery.org

There is a customs process in Honduras that requires OWS to register all donations with the customs office by 40 days prior to the trip. We also request the ability to pre-approve all medical donations to ensure the items can be used at our facility. If the items can be used at our center, our team can assist with any provide you with a customs letter.

Equipment is primarily donated and may be a couple of models older than what you typically use.

Some tests and medications are unavailable in Honduras or cost prohibitive to our patients. Our local team can recommend alternatives.

- See *general equipment* and *specialty-specific equipment* [here](#)
- See *instrument sets* [here](#)

Additional Information

Due to the emphasis on providing safe, high-quality care, HFSC has strict guidelines regarding nonmedical volunteers observing and scrubbing in on surgeries. Volunteers must be at least 15 years old to observe and at least 18 years old to scrub. All nonmedical volunteers are considered general volunteers and will be permitted to observe or scrub only during assigned shifts. Any exception must be approved by the Medical Director or Chief Medical Officer.

Contacts

Dr. Jody Stern joseph.stern221@gmail.com is One World Surgery's Physician Leadership Council representative for spine surgery. After reading your specialty informational packet, please feel free to contact them with any additional questions regarding spine surgery at HFSC.

Alec Helmke & Justin Tapper (Patient Coordinators) patients.hn@oneworldsurgery.org-
Resource for scheduling questions

Justyna Twardowski (Program Associate) medicalmissions@oneworldsurgery.org-*Resource for trip logistics questions such as flights, packing tips, recommended immunizations*