

Preparing for SURGERY

Essential steps to help you get ready for your procedure and understand what to expect



01 AT YOUR APPOINTMENT

- If possible, **ask a friend or family member to accompany you** to the appointment for support.
- **It is normal to feel nervous or scared** and forget things during the appointment.
- **Write your questions down** ahead of time to be sure you have answers you need.

KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR DOCTOR

- **Why Surgery?** Why is this operation needed? What are the goals? Are there other treatments?
- **Procedure Details:** What is the surgery and how it may impact physical abilities?
- **Risks & Benefits:** What are the potential complications, and what are the expected outcomes?
- **Anesthesia:** What type (local, general) and what are the risks? Ask if you need to stop or adjust any medications before surgery.
- **Recovery:** What is the anticipated recovery timeline? What support will or may be needed in the immediate post-operative period (inpatient stay or rehab stay) and once home?
- **Resources:** What resources may be needed (Physical Therapy/Occupational Therapy, visiting nurses for dressing changes or drain care, etc) and what equipment may be needed (wheelchair, walker, dressing supplies, etc).
- **Costs:** What financial impact might this have (what does insurance cover / not cover)?
- **Follow up:** Scheduled follow up and other appointments.

- **If you are hearing impaired:** be sure to wear hearing aids or ask your provider to speak slowly and look at you when speaking.
- **If English is not your first language,** you are entitled to a medical translator at the visit; please ask ahead of time so arrangements can be made. Ask for written information in the language you are most comfortable reading and understanding.



REVIEW HEALTH HISTORY

Tell your health care team about any:

- **Prior surgeries** and experience with anesthesia
- **Medical conditions**
- **Current or recent medications**
- **Allergies** to medications

MEDICATIONS

- **List all prescription medications** and any over-the-counter-medications including vitamins / minerals/ herbals, or supplements of any type.
 - **Examples include** aspirin, melatonin, fish oils, sleep aids, creams, lotions or salves or medications you take in certain instances (before the dentist, before a CAT scan).



02 IN THE WEEKS PRIOR TO SURGERY

PRE-SURGICAL CLEARANCE MAY BE REQUIRED

- **Pre-surgical clearance** is a health check to ensure it's safe for you to undergo surgery. It's usually done by your primary care provider, cardiologist, or a pre-op team. The process includes:
 - **reviewing** your medical history,
 - a **physical exam**,
 - **tests** like blood work, EKG, or stress test to assess heart and overall health.
- The purpose is to **help identify risks** and make adjustments, such as changing medications, before surgery to prevent complications and confirm your body can handle surgery and anesthesia. Clearance is typically required for major surgeries or procedures under general anesthesia, especially if you have chronic conditions.

PRE-SURGICAL PHONE CALL

- Regardless of whether or not presurgical clearance is required, **most patients can expect a phone call** from a nurse within a few days of surgery to review important information and address any questions or concerns you may have. The nurse typically will discuss:
 - **When to stop** eating and drinking
 - **When to take** or hold medications
 - **Confirm** arrival time and location
 - **What you should bring** with you (glasses, hearing aids, dentures, etc.) and what to not bring with you (valuables, cash)
 - **Ensure you have a responsible adult** to drive you home after the procedure, and **plan for caregivers** after surgery if necessary



03 LIFESTYLE

DIET

- **Eating a healthy, balanced diet** before and after surgery can help you recover faster. Lean proteins (like chicken, fish, eggs, beans), fruits, vegetables, and whole grains help your body prepare for healing. Include foods rich in vitamin C and zinc, such as citrus fruits, berries, nuts, and seeds, to support your immune system. Try to avoid heavy or greasy foods.

***TIP:** Be sure to follow instructions about when to stop eating the night before surgery.

HYDRATION

- Particularly 1-2 days prior to surgery **be sure to drink at least six 8 oz cups** of fluid each day and avoid caffeine to stay well hydrated.

EXERCISE

- **Being as fit as possible** before surgery can help you recover faster. Increasing your activity in the weeks prior to surgery may reduce both risk of complications and recovery time. If you have heart, lung, or joint problems, check with your doctor before starting any new routine.

ALCOHOL

- **Stop drinking alcohol at least 2-3 days** before surgery. For major surgery requiring general anesthesia, it is recommended to avoid alcohol for at least a week to minimize risk of serious complications including increased bleeding, complications from anesthesia and delayed recovery.

SMOKING

- **If you smoke or vape**, do your best to quit. Quitting can lower the risk of complication and help healing, especially if you quit at least 4 weeks before your surgery. The earlier you quit the better, but quitting even one day before your surgery can lower the risk.

RECREATIONAL DRUGS

- **Be honest with your providers** about use of any drugs such as marijuana (in any form), stimulants, and opioids (narcotics) to help keep you safe during your surgery. Use of any of these drugs can affect surgery and notably, anesthesia, leading to a variety of problems such as difficult controlling post-operative pain, delayed waking, blood pressure or breathing issues.

04 DAY BEFORE AND DAY OF SURGERY

DAY BEFORE

IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO FOLLOW PRE-SURGERY DIRECTIONS AND DIET.

- If you are having **local anesthesia**, it is unlikely you will need to fast, but check with your team for specific instructions as they do vary based on the procedure and provider.
- **Certain medications and supplements** that thin the blood or interfere with clotting may need to be discontinued for a specific period of time before receiving local anesthesia.
- If you are having **general anesthesia**, you will be told not to eat or drink anything after midnight before your procedure. This is because of the rare risk of food or liquid in your stomach getting into your lungs while you're under sedation or general anesthesia. Ask your anesthesiologist for guidance; you may be told you can drink clear liquids and take your regular medications.

ON THE DAY OF SURGERY

- **Be sure to arrive on time**; generally, at least two hours prior to your scheduled surgery time
- **Inform your surgical team** if you have developed any changes in your health such as: fevers, chills, sweats, or if you have started any new medications including any over the counter or supplements.
- You will be asked to provide the phone number of the driver arranged to pick you up if having day surgery and not scheduled for admission.



Preparation is **an important part** of ensuring a **safe and successful procedure**. If anything is unclear or changes arise, **contact your surgical team** so they can **guide you**.