

What to Expect for Inpatient Surgery

Referral/consult for surgery

Surgery is one important way that we can keep you healthy. When your primary care provider has a concern about your health, they may send you to a surgical specialist for further investigation.

During a consult visit, a surgeon will perform an examination and ask more questions. They will explain their findings and recommendations to you. They may recommend inpatient surgery, which will require an overnight stay at the hospital.

Pre-operative Visit

Once a procedure has been scheduled, a pre-operative visit with the Anesthesia Department will be needed. The anesthesiologist is a medical specialist responsible for sedation, 'putting you to sleep', and pain control after surgery. Some additional testing might be necessary, such as blood count test, urinalysis, chest X-ray, and/or electrocardiogram. A staff member will also discuss with you how to prepare for your operation, develop a care plan, and make sure that you have the appropriate support when you come home after your surgery.

Week Before Surgery

In the days before surgery, your doctor will recommend that some medications be avoided as they might interfere with healing or anesthesia. Some examples of over-the-counter medication are aspirin and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs such as Motrin, Advil, Excedrin and ibuprofen. Also reduce or refrain from smoking starting a week before surgery.

Night Before Surgery

Eat a light dinner in the late afternoon. Avoid alcohol 24 hours before surgery. Ask your provider if you should take your regular medications.

After midnight, do NOT eat any food including gum, candy, breath mints, or cough drops. Also do NOT drink anything - water, coffee, juice, etc. Do NOT swallow any of the water that is used to brush your teeth.

If you accidentally consume food or water tell your provider. Doing so could be dangerous and the surgery may have to be postponed. For your safety, surgery must be done on an empty stomach. Also, if you begin to feel sick or develop a fever call your provider.

These are very general instructions, ask your MD, as instructions vary with treatment.

Day of surgery

For outpatient procedures, patients should be at the hospital at least one hour before their surgery's scheduled time. A staff member will check you in and take you to the place where you will wait before your surgery. There you will change into a hospital gown.

If you wear glasses, contacts, and/or hearing aids they will need to be removed.

Take off all body piercings.

A staff member will come to check your blood pressure, pulse and temperature. Your anesthesiologist will come to talk to you about how you will be sedated, 'put to sleep', and cared for after surgery.

Shortly thereafter, you will be sedated and brought into the operating room for your procedure. If you have any questions feel free to ask them at any time. Our medical staff want to know about your concerns. They understand that surgery can be scary.

Remember to bring with you:

- Someone to take you home
- Your insurance card
- A change of comfortable clothes
- A case or holder for glasses, contacts, dentures or hearing aids (if you wear them)
- List of current medications and including vitamin, mineral and herbal supplements, and any over-the-counter drugs you might be taking
- A list of your allergies
- Any dietary restrictions
- Any legal arrangements that you have made such as power of attorney, living will, or advanced directives

The day of surgery you should NOT:

- Bring valuables - jewelry, credit cards or more money than necessary to fill any prescriptions
- Do not wear make-up and make sure nail polish is removed
- Do not use lotions, creams, aftershave, or perfume
- Do not use hairspray, mousse, or gels
- Do not shave or use deodorants near the site of surgery

Suggested Items to Pack for Your Inpatient Stay

- Robe
- Comfortable clothes
- Toiletries - hair brush, tooth brush, toothpaste, shampoo

- Something to read - books or magazines
- Slippers (non skid)
- Contact lenses, eyeglasses, hearing aids, dentures, prostheses

During Surgery for Friends and Family

We know that your surgery can be an anxious time for your friends and family who accompany you to your procedure. Our staff will keep them informed as to your progress while they wait in the waiting room. Your friends and family will be able to see you once you have been transferred up to your inpatient room.

After Surgery

After your surgery you will be taken to the recovery area. You will be monitored and given time to recover, then transferred to your inpatient room. When you awaken you will feel groggy. You might even feel nauseous. This is normal. You will have a care team who will be looking after you around the clock to make sure that you are being taken care of. Medical staff will be in and out of your room to check your vital signs, check and change dressings, and make sure that you are as comfortable as possible.

The length of your hospital stay will depend upon the type of surgery you had. Cambridge Health Alliance has flexible visiting hours so that your friends and family may visit you while you are in the hospital. Your room will also have different amenities for your comfort and to help you stay connected.

Your surgeon will determine when you are ready to go home. They will go over instructions on how to take care of yourself at home. You may also be given prescriptions that you will need to have filled. Appointments for checkups and rehab will also be made. If the person who will be picking you up from the hospital needs some extra help, a staff member will help you to your car.

You should take it easy the next few days after surgery. Do not drive or operate machinery the day after your surgery. If you have questions about what you should or should not do, ask your provider.

You may be tired and feel discomfort after surgery. This is to be expected. Your provider will give you something to ease the pain or discomfort. If you are in pain, have a fever, or drainage and/or pus from where you had surgery, call your provider right away. If you have any acute concerns, call 911 or have someone drive you to the closest emergency room.

Be sure to keep all post surgery appointments that you have with your surgeon. Call your provider's office for any questions that you might have.

General things to remember when home after surgery:

- Keep the surgical site/s clean and dry
- Get lots of rest
- Drink fluids
- Eat a healthy diet with fruits and vegetables
- Take all of the medications as your provider instructed.
- Keep taking them even if you feel better