

Preparing for Your Surgery

If you and your doctor decide that surgery is necessary, you'll need to learn what to expect from the procedure and create a treatment plan for the best possible results in recovery.

Mental and physical preparation for surgery is an important step toward a successful operation. Understanding the process and your role in it will help you recover quickly and reduce the risk of complications.

Pre-Surgery

Before surgery, your doctor will conduct a physical examination to ensure you don't have any conditions that will interfere with the surgery or its outcome. Routine tests, such as blood tests and X-rays, are usually performed a week before major surgery.

Here is a checklist to follow for your pre-surgery plan:

- Discuss any medications you are taking with your doctor to see if you need to stop taking them for the surgery. For example, anti-inflammatory medications should be stopped a week before surgery to minimize bleeding during the operation.
- Discuss options for preparing potential blood replacement, including donating your own blood, medical interventions, and other treatments.
- Smoking should be stopped or cut down prior to surgery to reduce risks and improve your recovery.
- Tooth, gum, bladder, or bowel problems should be treated before surgery to reduce the risk of infection.
- Eat a well-balanced diet supplemented by a daily multivitamin with iron.
- Report any infections to your surgeon. Surgery cannot be performed when infections are present.
- Arrange for someone to help out post-surgery with tasks like cooking, shopping, and laundry.
- Place items you use often within easy reach prior to surgery.
- Remove any loose carpets or electrical cords to avoid falls.
- Make sure you have a stable chair at home with a firm seat cushion, firm back, and two arms.

Recovering After Surgery

Here is your checklist of tips and advice to follow after surgery is complete:

- Have a family member or friend drive you home; you will not be able to drive for at least 24 hours after surgery.
- Do not eat or drink anything on the car ride home. The combination of anesthesia, food, and car motion can cause nausea or vomiting.
- After arriving home, wait until you are hungry to eat. Begin with a light meal and avoid greasy food for 24 hours.
- Take your pain medicine as directed. Begin the pain medicine when you start getting uncomfortable, but before you're in severe pain. If you wait until the pain is severe to take your pain medication, you'll have more difficulty controlling the pain.