

Preparing for Surgery

Prior to your surgery

Smoking

If you smoke, you should stop before your operation. Any period of nonsmoking helps, but to get the most benefit, you should quit for at least two weeks prior to surgery. Quitting or cutting down on smoking will allow you to tolerate anesthetic more easily. It will also be easier for your lungs to resume normal function after surgery. You will not cough as much, and the risk of infection is decreased.

Medications

If you are taking aspirin, ibuprofen or any of the non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications that can inhibit blood clotting, you should discontinue this two weeks prior to your surgery. Using acetaminophen until the time of surgery is acceptable. Please notify your doctor of all other prescriptions and non-prescription medications you are taking.

Anemia

If you are anemic, please take an iron supplement prior to your surgery.

Pre-operative doctors visit

You may have a pre-operative visit scheduled with your doctor. This is the time to ask all of your questions about your upcoming surgery and recovery. Your doctor may perform an examination at this visit. Bring a current list of your medication and drug allergies to this appointment.

Hospital preparation

If you are scheduled for in-patient surgery, you will be asked to pre-register at the hospital. You will be asked to obtain special testing and meet with an anesthesiologist two to three days prior to surgery. For outpatient surgery, no pre-operative blood work is required. You may have your hemoglobin checked the day of surgery.

Recovery in the hospital

Pain

Your doctor will order pain medicine for you. You are encouraged to ask for the medication on a regular basis before the pain becomes severe. Ibuprofen may be prescribed in addition to a narcotic to enhance the effect of the narcotic without increasing side effects.

Medications

You should continue to take most of your regular medications while in the hospital. In addition, your doctor may prescribe antibiotics. Medicine to help with nausea, sleeping or headaches is also available.

Activity

After the surgery, it is important to re-expand your lungs. You will be asked to breathe deeply, cough and change your position in bed often. As your strength returns, the nurse will have you move around as

much as you can. Depending on the type of surgery you've had, you may be able to start walking soon after your operation. The sooner you resume activity, the sooner your body's function can get back to normal.

Length of stay

Your insurance company will have a standard length of stay for an uncomplicated surgery of your type. You should contact the company ahead of time to determine this.

Recovery at home

Outpatient surgery

After outpatient surgery, you should be able to go home within 1-2 hours. You should not drive for 24 hours after outpatient surgery, so you should arrange to have someone drive you home.

Activity

Gradually resume normal activity as tolerated. No strenuous activity or heavy lifting are allowed until after your post-operative visit. Do not drive while you are still taking prescription pain medicine. Walk several times per day. Expect to feel extremely fatigued during your recovery. This is a normal response and gradually passed with time. Limit lifting to 15 pounds or less during the first four weeks. Climbing stairs should cause no problems.

Medication

Take your pain medication as needed. Ibuprofen acts to enhance narcotics and may be recommended in addition to a narcotic. Acetaminophen may also be sufficient. Resume all of your usual medications as previously prescribed. A Dulcolax suppository or Fleets enema may be used if needed for a bowel movement. A stool softener (Colace, Citrcel, Fibercon) may also be helpful during the first week or two of recovery.

Incision

Pain and bruising around the incision(s) are normal after surgery. Remove outer bandages (if any) one day after surgery. You may shower after the gauze dressing are off. Do not pull or cut any sutures. Do not use ointments, topical antibiotics or peroxide on the wound unless you are directed to do so. If your skin folds over the incision, you may use a hair dryer to keep the incision dry. The incision is usually healed by six weeks after surgery.

Additional instructions

Call the office for temperature over 101 degrees, severe pain, nausea, vomiting, redness or drainage around the incisions, urinary burning or if you have any other questions.