

Your Surgery

What to expect and how to prepare

This handout explains what to expect, how to prepare, and how to plan for your recovery after surgery.

The Patient Care Coordinator (PCC) will call you to schedule your surgery.

PCC: _____ Phone number: _____

How to Prepare

- Do **not** take any aspirin or other products that affect blood clotting for 1 week before your surgery. Two of these are ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) and naproxen (Aleve, Naprosyn). See the handout “Medicines to Avoid Before Surgery.”
- Do **not** shave any part of your body that you do not already shave every day. If you normally shave near your surgical site, do not shave that area for 2 days (48 hours) before your surgery.
- You must have an adult drive you home from the hospital and stay with you the first night. You cannot drive or take a taxi or bus by yourself when you leave the hospital.



Do not take aspirin or other products that affect blood clotting for 1 week before your surgery.

24 Hours Before Your Surgery

- **Take 2 showers:** Take 1 shower the night before, and a 2nd shower the morning of your surgery. Use the antibacterial soap your nurse gave you to wash your body.

Do **not** use the antibacterial soap on your face and hair. (See directions that came with the soap.) Use your own soap and shampoo on your face and hair. Use clean towels to dry off, and put on clean clothing.

- **Arrival time:** A staff person from the pre-surgery clinic will call you by 5 p.m. the night before your surgery. If you are having surgery on a Monday, they will call you the Friday before. If you do not hear from them by 5 p.m., please call 206-598-6334.

The pre-surgery clinic staff person will tell you when to come to the hospital and will remind you how to prepare for your surgery. If you have questions, they may forward your call to a nurse in the pre-surgery clinic or ask you to call your surgeon's nurse.

Day of Surgery

- Wear loose-fitting clothing that will fit easily over your dressings (bandages).
- Do not wear jewelry, nail polish, or make-up. You will be asked to remove dentures and contact lenses.
- Do not bring any valuables with you. But, you will need money to pay for your medicines when you are discharged.
- To lower your risk of infection, you will be covered with a heating blanket to warm your body while you wait to go into the operating room. Ask for a heating blanket if you do not receive one.

What to Expect After Your Surgery

Most patients are ready to go home the day of surgery. Remember, you will not be able to drive yourself or travel alone. Arrange for someone to take you home and for someone to stay with you the first night after surgery.

Precautions

Medicine given during and after your surgery will affect you. For 24 hours after your surgery do **not**:

- Drive or travel alone
- Run machines
- Drink alcohol
- Sign any legal papers, or care for another person

Incision Care and Dressing

- Keep your incision dry for 48 hours.
- If you have:
 - **Gauze dressing** over your incision, you may cover it with plastic wrap and take a shower.
 - **Plastic dressing** over your incision, it is OK to shower. If the plastic dressing gets loose, cover it with plastic wrap when you shower.
- Remove your dressing in 48 hours. Underneath the dressing, there will be tape strips over your incisions. These tapes will fall off in several days.
- Check your incisions every day for signs of infection:
 - Redness
 - Increased swelling
 - Foul-smelling drainage
 - An increase in the amount of drainage from your wound

Tell your nurse if you have any of these signs of infection.

Pain Control

For several weeks after your surgery you may feel pain, or a pulling at the incision site. Use this as a guide not to overdo activities. (See below for your activity restrictions.)

Take your pain medicines as prescribed. If you are concerned about your pain or are very uncomfortable even after using your pain medicine, please call the clinic.

You may take your other medicines as prescribed, but do **not** take aspirin or other products that affect blood clotting for 1 week after your surgery.

Constipation

Some prescription pain medicine can cause constipation. If you are taking any of these medicines, you will be given a stool softener. You may also need to take a laxative so that you do not strain when having bowel movements.

Activity Restrictions

Call the Clinic or Your Doctor If You Have:

- Bleeding or drainage that soaks your dressing
- A fever higher than 100.5°F (38°C)
- Shaking and chills
- Any sign of infection in your incision:
 - Redness
 - Increasing pain
 - Swelling
 - Foul-smelling drainage
 - A change in the type or amount of drainage
- Nausea and/or vomiting
- Concerns that cannot wait until your follow-up visit

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns.

Weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., call the Surgical Specialties Clinic at 206-598-4477.

After hours and on weekends and holidays, call 206-598-6190 and ask for the resident on call for your surgeon to be paged.