Questions You May Have About Your Surgery

This guide includes some common questions about having surgery. We hope these questions will help you think about your own questions about your surgery. Please use the spaces in this guide to make notes about your own questions.
Questions You May Have About Your Surgery

You are an important and valued member of your healthcare team. You have probably learned a lot from your healthcare team about your condition and surgery options, but it’s natural to have questions. It’s important to ask any questions you have when you meet with your surgeon or surgical team.

Asking questions will help you to be fully informed and ready before, during, and after your surgery. Write down your questions, and bring a pen or pencil to make notes when you meet with your surgeon. Consider bringing a family member or friend with you.

Understanding your surgery

- Why are you recommending this surgery for me?
- Are there treatment options other than surgery? If I decide not to have surgery, what can I expect?
- What are the risks and benefits of this surgery?
- If I change my mind, can I have surgery at a later date?
- Are there any possible complications? How often do they happen?
- Will I need any other treatment after this surgery?

Notes:

Preparing for your surgery

- How long should I expect to wait for an appointment for my surgery?
- Is there anything I can do to help my condition while I wait for surgery?
- After I receive my surgery booking or am admitted, is it possible my surgery could be postponed or delayed?
- How will I know if my surgery is cancelled? Will someone call me?
- If my surgery is cancelled, will the delay put me at risk?
- How many hours do I need to fast (not eat) before my surgery? What does this include? Can I drink water? Can I take my medications?
- Are there any medications I should stop taking before my surgery? If so, how long before surgery should I stop taking them?
- What do I need to bring with me when I come for surgery? Should I bring my medications? What should I bring to wear after surgery?
• Will the surgeon speak with my family and friends after my surgery?
• Is there anything that I should not bring with me to the hospital (e.g., jewelry, cash)?

• Should I plan to go home after surgery, or will I need to stay in the hospital overnight or longer?
• If the plan is for me to stay in the hospital after surgery, how long will I be expected to be in the hospital?

• If the plan is for me to go home after surgery, is there still a chance I could be admitted to the hospital? Will someone call my family if this happens?
• Do I need someone to drive me home after surgery?

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Understanding what to expect during and right after surgery

• How long should I expect my surgery to last?
• Will I be under full anesthetic (unconscious) during surgery? If not, what should I expect? Will I be fully awake and alert, or will I be sleepy or sleeping?
• Will I feel any pain during surgery?

• Will I have an intravenous (IV) or other lines and tubes? What are they for?
• How will my loved ones get information on my progress during my surgery?
• Where can my family members wait during my surgery?

• Is there anywhere for my family members to stay while I am undergoing and recovering from surgery?
• How will my family know where to visit me after surgery?
• When will I be able to see my loved ones after surgery?

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What to expect from the recovery process

- How can I expect to feel after coming out of anesthetic?
- How much pain or discomfort can I expect after surgery? For how long?
- When will I be discharged?
- How long will it take to recover from this surgery?
- What can I do to help my pain at home? Will I get a prescription for pain medication? Will over-the-counter pain medication work?
- Should I keep taking my regular medications?
- Are there any symptoms I should watch for after surgery?
- Will I need physiotherapy or other support services or equipment to help me recover from surgery?
- Will my normal activities be restricted during my recovery time? Which activities are restricted? Can I lift the kettle or a pot of water?
- When can I return to normal activities? (e.g., working, driving, having sex, exercising)
- When will I have a follow-up appointment with my surgeon after my surgery? How many follow-up appointments will I have?
- If I don’t have a family doctor, what do I do to follow-up after surgery?
- Who do I call if I have questions or concerns?

What other questions do you have? Please write down your other questions here:

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The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.