

Planning for Your Hospital Stay After Surgery

Your surgery will be at:

- Halifax Infirmary
- Victoria General Hospital
- Dartmouth General Hospital

Date: _____

Time: _____

Planning for Your Hospital Stay After Surgery

This pamphlet will give you some information about your care before and after surgery. If you have any questions, please ask. We are here to help you.

One week before surgery:

- Certain medications may need to be stopped before your surgery. Tell your surgeon at least one week before your surgery if you are taking any of the following medications or supplements:
 - › blood thinners (e.g., warfarin)
 - › over-the-counter medications (e.g., Aspirin[®], ASA)
 - › herbal preparations
- **If you have an allergy to any medication(s) and you do not know its name(s), check with your pharmacy or doctor.**

Learning about the time of your surgery:

Halifax Infirmary & Victoria General:

- The day before your surgery, we will call you between noon and 2 p.m. to confirm the time of your surgery. If your surgery is on a Monday, we will call you on Friday.
- If you are not going to be home, you must call us to confirm the time.
- If we have not called you by 2 p.m., please call the hospital site where your surgery is scheduled between 2 and 3:30 p.m.

Halifax Infirmary 902-473-3187

Victoria General Hospital 902-473-6629

Dartmouth General Hospital:

- You will get your surgery date and time at your Pre-Assessment Clinic appointment. If your surgery date changes, your surgeon's office will call you.

The night before surgery:

- Take a complete bath or shower and shampoo your hair the evening before or the morning of your surgery. **Do not use scented products.** Nova Scotia Health Authority (NSHA) is scent-free.
- You will be given instructions about skin preparation, if needed.
- **Do not smoke after your evening meal on the night before your surgery.** Smoking can increase the secretions in your lungs, and you could have problems with your breathing after surgery.
- **NSHA is smoke-free.** Ask your doctor about the Smoking Cessation Program.

The day of surgery:

Please bring the following to the hospital:

- ALL of your medications in their original containers
- Provincial health card
- Private insurance card (if you have one)
- Personal Directive (if you have one, please bring a copy)
- CPAP (if you have one)
- **If you have a fever, cold, or flu-like symptoms, call your surgeon's office before coming to the hospital.**
- Follow the instructions you were given in the Pre-Admission Clinic about taking your medications.

Please come to the Same Day Surgery Unit:

- Halifax Infirmary, 5th floor
- **Arrive 3 hours before your scheduled surgery time** or as directed by your surgeon's office.
 - › If your surgery is scheduled for 7:30 a.m., please make sure you arrive by 5:30 a.m.
- Enter at the Robie Street entrance, and look for the elevator to the left of the kiosks. Take the elevator to the 5th floor and register at the desk.

- Victoria General, Victoria building, 10th floor
(use Dickson Building entrance if arriving before 6 a.m.)
 - **Arrive 3 hours before your scheduled surgery time** or as directed by your surgeon's office.
 - › If your surgery is scheduled for 7:30 a.m., please make sure you arrive by 6 a.m.
 - Take the Victoria building elevator to the 10th floor, and follow the signs to Registration.

- Dartmouth General, main level – register at main desk.
 - **Arrive 2 hours before your scheduled surgery time** or as directed by your surgeon's office.
 - › If your surgery is scheduled for 7:30 a.m., please make sure you arrive by 6:30 a.m.
 - Register at the registration desk at the main entrance.

Anesthetic

With a general anesthetic, you will be given medication to put you to sleep for your surgery. A regional anesthetic means an area of your body is frozen. Sedation (medication to help you relax) is usually given along with regional anesthesia.

If you are having a general or regional anesthetic:

- **Do not eat any food, including candy, after midnight the night before surgery.**
- **You may drink clear liquids up until 3 hours before your surgery, unless otherwise directed. Clear liquids include: water, pulp-free juice such as apple or cranberry juice (NOT ORANGE JUICE), sports drinks, black tea, or coffee (WITHOUT MILK OR CREAM).**
- **You may take your medications as told by your doctor with sips of water.**
- **You may brush your teeth.**

After a general anesthetic, regional anesthetic, or intravenous (IV) sedation:

- If you have questions or concerns specifically about your anesthesia care, for the:
 - › Halifax Infirmary or Victoria General Hospital, please call 902-473-4326. If it is after business hours, leave a confidential voicemail and your call will be returned.
 - › Dartmouth General Hospital, please call your surgeon's office.

This pamphlet is just a guide. If you have questions, please talk to your health care provider. We are here to help you.

Delays

- Delays in the Operating Room (OR) may cause a change in your scheduled surgery time.
- There is a chance that your surgery could be cancelled because of an emergency. If this happens, your surgeon's office will call you with a new date.

Dentures

- Wear your dentures to the hospital.
- Just before you go to the OR, you will be asked to remove your dentures and place them in a denture cup labelled with your name.

Glasses/contact lenses

- Bring a case in which to store your glasses when they are not being used.
- Do not wear contact lenses. If you **must** wear contact lenses, bring your lens container and cleaning solutions. **Remember to tell your nurse that you are wearing contact lenses. They must be removed before you go to the OR.**

Hearing aids

If you wear a hearing aid, bring it and a storage container with you.

Personal care items

- Please bring a dressing gown, pyjamas, slippers, mouthwash, toothpaste, toothbrush, comb, and other personal grooming items you may need for the first day or two.
- Other items may be brought to the hospital as they are needed. If possible, leave these items with family or friends to bring to your room after surgery.

Valuables

- Leave all valuables (e.g., jewelry, money, credit cards, cheque books) at home. The hospital is not responsible for the loss of any item.
- **All jewelry, including toe rings, must be taken out at home. Any item used to pierce ANY body part, such as the nose, belly button, tongue, or ear, must also be taken out.**

Same Day Surgery Unit

Pre-operative (Pre-op) preparation

- **NO FOOD OR DRINKS ARE ALLOWED IN THE PRE-OP ROOM.**
- You will get ready for the OR in this area. We will ask you to change into hospital clothing: johnny shirt, dressing gown, and slippers.
- A family member or friend can wait with you in the pre-op area until it is time for you to go to surgery.
- The pre-op nurse will talk with you to complete your admission paperwork. To meet our patient safety standards, we will ask several questions that you may have already answered.

Surgery

The Operating Room (OR)

- An OR nurse will interview you and ask you several questions based on a surgical safety checklist.
- The OR is usually cool. We will give you a warm blanket.
- OR staff will help you move to a bed.
- Before you go to sleep, you will have an intravenous (IV) started.
- Depending on the procedure, a large pad may be placed on your leg, back, or shoulder. This is a grounding pad. It is used as a safety measure.
- Your surgeon and anesthesiologist will talk with you before your surgery.

Patient progress updates for family and friends

All sites have a waiting area for family and friends. At the Halifax Infirmary and Victoria General sites, a liaison nurse visits the waiting area several times during the day. This nurse will keep your family and friends up to date about your condition and progress. The liaison nurse works Monday–Friday from 9 a.m.–5 p.m.

At the Dartmouth General Hospital, Same Day Surgery staff will update your family and friends.

After surgery

Recovery area

- You will wake up in the Post-Anesthetic Care Unit (PACU). Most patients recover from their anesthetic in this area.
- The nurses caring for you in the PACU will frequently check your:
 - › blood pressure and pulse
 - › breathing/possible need for oxygen
 - › intravenous (IV)
 - › dressings and drainage tubes
- They will also check your level of discomfort/pain and give you pain medications as needed. You may be asked to rate your pain on a scale of 0-10. The nurses on the unit will continue to check your discomfort/pain as well.
- The skin around where you had your surgery may be pink. This is normal. It is from a cleansing solution used in the OR to make sure your skin is clean before surgery.
- When you are more awake and comfortable, we will take you to your nursing unit.

Nursing unit

- On your unit, the nurses will continue to check you.
- You will have a call bell beside you to call a nurse if you need to.

Pain control

- The staff on the unit will make you as comfortable as possible. Pain medication will be available.
- Please do not wait until you are in severe pain before asking your nurse for pain medication. Keeping your pain under control will help you heal.

Deep breathing and coughing exercises

- You will be expected to do the deep breathing and coughing exercises that you practiced at home.
 - › Take a deep breath in through your nose.
 - › Hold your breath for 2 to 3 seconds, by counting 1, 2, 3.
 - › Blow the air out through your mouth.
 - › Repeat this type of breathing in and out 6 or 7 times.
 - › On your last breath in, hold it for 1 second and firmly cough. If you cough up any phlegm, repeat the exercise.

These exercises help keep your lungs clear and make your breathing easier.

- The best time to do these exercises is about 20 minutes after you take your pain medication.
- When doing these exercises, hold a pillow over any abdominal (stomach area) incisions (cuts). This will help support your incisions and ease any discomfort.
- The nurse on the unit will tell you how often to do these exercises.

Feet and leg exercises

- Exercising your feet and legs helps the blood circulate better.
 - › Point your toes downward towards the floor, relax your foot, and then point your toes upward to the ceiling, then relax.
 - › Make circles with both ankles going to the right. Repeat the same going to the left. Relax.
 - › Bend your knees up and down.
- **Don't do these exercises if your surgeon says not to.**
- These exercises should be done at least 5 times every hour. Your nurse can give you more help or information if needed.
- Please avoid staying in bed for long periods of time without moving your legs and feet.

Activity after surgery:

- It is important to be as active as possible. You may have discomfort, but do not let it stop you from doing things for yourself. The length of time that you need to be in bed will depend on your type of surgery.
- Someone will help you out of bed the first couple of times, and then as needed.

Nutrition

At first, you will have an IV. When your body can handle fluids and food, they will be added to your diet, as ordered by your surgeon.

Passing your urine

- When you return to your room on the unit, your nurse will ask you to try to pass urine (pee).
- A catheter may be used to drain your bladder if you have discomfort or a hard time passing urine. It will be taken out when you no longer need it.
- If your surgery includes creating a urostomy, your nurse will give you information on urinary patterns and caring for your ostomy at home.

Bowel movements

- There may be a change in your bowel habits.
- Your surgeon **may or may not** start you on a laxative or stool softener, because pain medication can cause constipation.
- If your surgery includes creating an ostomy, your nurse will give you information on bowel patterns and caring for the ostomy at home.

Specific instructions for your surgery

- The nurses will talk with you about your type of surgery and the routines of your surgeon as applicable.
- You will be given specific instructions for your surgery before discharge.

Visiting hours

- Please ask your nurse about visiting hours.
- There is a rest period for all patients from 2:30–3:30 p.m.

Going home

- **Discharge time is 11 a.m.**
- Make plans to have someone take you home when you are discharged.

Notes:

Looking for more health information?

Find this pamphlet and all our patient resources here: <http://library.nshealth.ca/PatientGuides>

Contact your local public library for books, videos, magazines, and other resources.

For more information, go to <http://library.novascotia.ca>

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time: call 811 or visit <https://811.novascotia.ca>

Learn about other programs and services in your community: call 211 or visit <http://ns.211.ca>

Nova Scotia Health Authority promotes a smoke-free, vape-free, and scent-free environment.

Please do not use perfumed products. Thank you!

www.nshealth.ca

Prepared by: Same Day Surgery Units (VG, HI, & DGH sites)

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The information is not intended to be and does not constitute health care or medical advice.

If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

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