

Preparing for My Orthopedic Surgery

After you and your doctor decide that surgery is the best treatment for your condition or injury, you may have a multitude of questions and concerns. Surgery is a major commitment because it affects your lifestyle for several weeks and sometimes months after surgery. Preparing for surgery can be overwhelming—but you can make it easier on yourself and on your family by being prepared and knowing what to expect.

The following information is provided to assist you in preparing for your orthopedic surgery.

Basic Instructions: 0 to 7 Days Prior to My Surgery

Food & Drink

Please do not consume food or liquids after midnight on the evening prior to your surgery date due to complications associated with anesthesia. This includes mints and chewing gum. Additionally, we recommend that you do not smoke, chew tobacco, or consume alcohol for at least 24 hours prior to your surgery.

Presurgery Hygiene & Dress

- You may brush your teeth prior to surgery, but remember not to swallow liquids after midnight.
- Jewelry, watches, and body piercings should not be worn on the day of surgery.
- Do not bring valuables with you. You may wear dentures and glasses. However, it is recommended that you bring the cases to place them in during surgery. If you wear contacts, they will need to be removed, so bring your solution and a case with you.
- Please wear comfortable, loose clothing, appropriate for the procedure being performed, such as a button front blouse/shirt for shoulder surgery.
- Please bring flat sole, slip-on walking shoes.
- If you have been provided with any medical equipment prior to your surgery date, such as slings, crutches, postoperative shoes, or walkers, please present them at check-in. You may also want to bring pillows and blankets for your trip home.

Medications & Testing

- Please stop taking all herbal remedies, aspirin, and anti-inflammatory medications (Advil, Aleve, Ibuprofen, Motrin, Naproxen, etc.) seven days prior to surgery unless otherwise instructed. However, it is okay to take Tylenol (acetaminophen) if something is needed for pain.
- If you are currently taking a prescription blood thinner (Coumadin, Plavix, etc.) on a regular basis for heart problems or stroke, please call your surgeon's office immediately for further instructions.
- You may take your usual morning blood pressure, heart, acid reflux, and/or seizure medications on the morning of surgery with a sip of water.
- Do not take any diabetic medicine the day of surgery. However, please make sure to bring your diabetic medication with you.
- Please provide an accurate list of daily medications when they are reviewing your health history. Continue to take all prescription medications as normal unless informed otherwise by the nursing staff. You will be instructed on which medications to take the day of the procedure. If you have any questions about which medications you may or may not take the day of your procedure, please call us at **(910) 484-2171**.
- If you experience any health changes, such as an elevated temperature, cold, cough, or other health-related problems, please notify your doctor immediately.

Transportation

As a reminder, you, the patient, will not be permitted to drive a car or leave the surgery center or hospital unattended after surgery. It is necessary to make arrangements for a responsible adult or caregiver to drive you home and stay with you for 24 hours following surgery.

Basic Instructions: The Day of My Surgery

- At reception, you will be asked to complete the forms that apply to your stay with us, such as assignment of benefits, estimate of charges, and Medicare's advance beneficiary notice, if applicable.
- The nurse will show you to the preoperative waiting area and assist in preparing you for surgery. You will be asked to change into a surgical gown. Your clothes and personal belongings will be secured, or you may give them to the person who has accompanied you to the surgery center or hospital.
- A nurse will obtain and/or verify a health history, including height, weight, temperature, pulse, and blood pressure. Any patient with a history of diabetes will undergo a blood glucose test. Other tests, such as an EKG and pregnancy test for women of childbearing age, may be performed as needed.

- If your procedure is scheduled with anesthesia, you will visit with your anesthesia provider prior to your surgery.
- Your doctor will have you read and sign a surgery consent form acknowledging your understanding of the procedure and granting permission for your surgeon to perform the scheduled procedure(s). If the person having surgery is a minor or is unable to sign forms, a parent or legal guardian must sign the consent form.
- A parent or legal guardian must accompany any minor or impaired adult on the day of surgery and remain throughout the patient's stay.

Basic Instructions: Immediately Following My Surgery

After your surgery is completed, you will be cared for in the recovery area, where you will be closely monitored by the recovery nurses until you are deemed ready to go home or moved to your inpatient room. At the time of dismissal, the surgery center or hospital nurse will give you and your escort specific instructions regarding your home care.

You have the right to expect appropriate pain control. We may not be able to rid you of all your pain, but we can lower your pain to a level you can tolerate. Your doctor will write a prescription for pain pills for use at home. The surgery center or hospital does **not** fill your home prescription. You will need to be prepared to purchase your pain medication at your pharmacy of choice.

Returning Home After Surgery

Due to the use of anesthesia and/or narcotics, you may experience sleepiness, dizziness, or nausea. These are normal side effects, which may continue for 12 to 24 hours. Remember to drink plenty of liquids upon your return home.

Due to the symptoms you may experience after your surgery, please do not do any of the following activities for at least 24 hours after discharge, or longer if you are taking pain medications:

- Drive and operate equipment or machinery
- Sign important papers
- Make significant decisions
- Drink alcoholic beverages

The next business day following surgery, a nurse will call to check on you and to answer any questions you may have.

If you experience any problems or difficulties following your surgery, please call **(910) 484-2171**.

Preparation Guides

Preparation Guide: Personal Assistance

After surgery, you may require assistance from—or total dependence upon—another person when performing a multitude of daily tasks. From dressing and showering to childcare and running errands, be prepared to ask for help from people whom you and your family are comfortable with. The following is for informational purposes only and should be used at your discretion.

- Identify a family member or close friend who will be able to monitor and assist you throughout your recovery period, particularly for the week following surgery. It is especially necessary for that person to stay with you for the first 24 hours after surgery so that he or she can help you get settled and maneuver around the house.
- If you have children, be very watchful of toys, games, controllers, or any other out-of-place items. You should ask your babysitter or a close friend or relative to stay with you to assist with childcare.
- Inform your mailman that you will be having surgery. He or she might be willing to drop off the mail at your door.

Preparation Guide: Ambulatory Assistive Devices

As a surgical patient, the use of a wheelchair, crutches, a walker, or other similar ambulatory device may be necessary after your surgery. The following tips are for you to consider prior to surgery to help you adjust to your new equipment:

- Find out what type of assistive device you will be using after your surgery, and visit your medical supply provider or your doctor's office to practice using this equipment.
- Work on your upper body strength. This will make crutch- and wheelchair-handling much more manageable.
- Apply for a temporary Handicap Parking permit. Address this with your doctor several weeks before your surgery—he or she will need to assist you with obtaining a permit.
- Set up a temporary bedroom for yourself if your bedroom is not on the main floor. If there are items you may need from another level of the house, be sure to collect them prior to surgery and have them at a close distance. Keep in mind that this room should be a low-traffic area of the house because you will need plenty of rest.
- Be sure to bring these items on your surgery day and present them during check in.

Preparation Guide: Patient-Proof My Bathroom

It is important to place emphasis on preparing your bathroom for postsurgical use because it is an area of the house where accidents are significantly more likely. Bathrooms are often tight spaces with a number of slippery surfaces and small appliances or utensils. Following these precautions can help you avoid an accident that could cause re-injury.

- Place the toiletries that you'll need within easy reach on your counter so that you don't have to strain to rummage through drawers or medicine cabinets.
- Ensure that you have an adequate supply of toiletries for your recovery period. You should set out additional rolls of toilet paper, as opposed to storing them under the sink.
- If your towels are stored in low places, such as in baskets or bottom cupboards, make sure they are within comfortable reach without the need to stoop or bend over.
- Set out a handheld mirror if you will need it to monitor your wound or for assistance in grooming.
- When it comes to showering or bathing, you should have a slip-resistant mat inside of the bathtub and a slip-resistant rug outside of the bathtub to reduce the risk of falling. You may also want to consider installing handrails to assist you when getting in and out.

Preparation Guide: Patient-Proof My Home

You may not view them as such now, but after surgery, you will have a heightened sense of awareness of the numerous hazards and obstacles in your house. By making the following adjustments, your house can be a more conducive environment to your post surgery needs.

- Fix and/or be aware of any uneven flooring in your house or uneven concrete on your driveway or patio.
- If you have steps leading up to your house, try wiggling the railing to gauge its stability, and tighten the screws if necessary. If you have outdoor steps without a railing, discuss installing one, especially if your surgery will take place during the winter months.
- Decrease your risk for falling by securing any loose cords or wires to the walls or behind furniture.
- Set your thermostat before you go in for surgery, especially if it is positioned high on the wall. This way, your house will be comfortable when you return, and you won't have to stand or reach to adjust the temperature.
- Store your groceries on low-level shelves so they are within reach without the need to strain or use a stepstool.
- Set up lamps, nightlights, or additional lighting in dimly lit areas. Avoid walking in the dark, when drowsy, or while using pain medications that cause dizziness or nausea. Keeping a flashlight nearby may also be useful in the event of a power outage.

- Be sure that all frequently used electronic devices have fresh batteries, are fully charged, and/or are firmly plugged into their outlets. The last thing you want to do after surgery is bend, twist, or crouch in awkward positions for hard-to-reach outlets.
- For safety and comfort reasons, check the batteries in your fire and carbon monoxide detectors to ensure that they are working properly and that they will last through your recovery period. You won't be able to change the batteries in fire detectors while recovering because of the danger posed by standing on chairs or stools.
- If you wear contacts or glasses, remember to keep them close to you at all times, and do not walk through the house without them. You may want to consider purchasing an extra pair of glasses for your convenience.
- Buy, rent, or borrow books, magazines, and DVDs to help you pass the time as your body rests. Use remotes as necessary, and if your DVD player is not easily accessible without bending or crouching, consider moving it temporarily.
- Shop for a pillowed lap desk so that you can comfortably use your laptop while lying down.
- Purchase a reaching tool that can help you pick up things that have fallen on the floor.
- If you know that you will be spending a lot of time on your couch, reposition your ottoman to your comfort. You should certainly not be moving furniture or heavy items post surgery.

Preparation Guide: Personal Preparation

Listed below are some reminders and suggestions for things to accomplish prior to surgery so that your recovery period is as leisurely and stress-free as possible. Taking care of some of your responsibilities beforehand can allow you to focus on your recovery, not your workload.

- If possible, pay your monthly bills beforehand. Then you won't have to worry about making unnecessary trips out to the mailbox!
- It is sometimes necessary for you to give written or verbal consent for someone to pick up prescriptions on your behalf. Ask about your pharmacy's policy prior to surgery to see whether you will need to make arrangements accordingly.
- Write out a list of phone numbers, including your doctor's office and pharmacy, for your reference and for anyone who may be assisting you throughout the duration of your recovery.
- Write down the office hours of your pharmacy and doctor's office to ensure that you will never have to go without your necessary medications.
- Consider using a pillbox to help you keep track of dosages and to make sure that you're taking the right medications at the right intervals. It might also be helpful to create and update a medication chart.

- Make sure that all errands or household chores, such as washing dishes or doing laundry, are completed before your surgery. Strenuous activity is strongly discouraged, and you will need an abundance of clean clothing and dishes for your recovery period.
- Begin devising a grocery list the week before your surgery, and go to the store within a couple of days before your surgery so that your groceries are still fresh when you return home.
- On your grocery list, you should include milk and/or vitamin D, which promotes bone health. When buying milk, stick to the smaller containers that are easier to lift.
- It is highly recommended that you stock up on pre-made microwave meals or that you cook meals and freeze them for use after surgery. Microwavable meals are quick and allow you to avoid any movements that may put additional stress on your body, like hovering and bustling around the kitchen.
- Consider buying a reusable, spill-proof drinking glass. They are perfect for staying hydrated while resting in bed and lying down.
- Use paper plates and plastic silverware temporarily if nobody is available to help you wash your dishes.
- Make yourself comfortable! Set out loose-fitting clothing on your dresser or bed so that you can easily change without straining.
- Avoid wearing socks or slippers without tread on the bottom—they generally don't provide adequate traction and can be easy to slip or trip in.

Preparation Guide: Travel Safety

It is often recommended that surgery patients refrain from traveling during recovery. However, travel is often unavoidable, so we advise you to keep your travel and outdoor exercise to a minimum and avoid long distances. If you must travel, keep in mind the following tips:

- Stop for some light stretching at random intervals during trips that last more than an hour or two.
- If you are susceptible to motion sickness, especially while taking certain medications, you should pack water and a snack.
- Consider environmental and weather-related issues. For instance, make sure that you travel on well-maintained roads, especially if your surgery is scheduled during the winter months.
- Avoid hazardous driving conditions, such as driving in the fog, at night, or during rush hour.
- Do not walk outside without assistance, and avoid walking in rainy or snowy conditions.
- Also, steer clear of wet grass, slippery sidewalks, and rough or uneven surfaces, such as gravel, brick, or cobblestone roads.