

Preparing for Surgery: Instruction sheet

Knowing what to do can help you and your family be more aware and prepared before your surgery.

Your doctor or nurse will tell you which medications to stop taking before surgery, and which ones you will need to take with a sip of water. If you have any questions, please call your doctor's office.

If you have any special needs, tell the nurse during your prescreening call AND the nurse assigned to you on the day of surgery. Examples include a need to communicate in a language other than English, or a chronic condition that requires special care.

Your arrival and surgery are scheduled for specific times. However, some surgeries have unexpected delays. This means the actual **surgery start time** may be later than the scheduled time. Even so, please plan to check in at the scheduled **arrival time**.

My surgery

Name of surgery _____

Surgeon _____

Surgery facility _____

Where to go _____

Date _____ The facility will contact you with an arrival time.

What to do and not do before surgery

- **DO** drink clear liquids up to 2 hours before your scheduled check-in time. Clear liquids include water, glucose water, fruit juices without pulp (such as apple or grape juice), sparkling water or soda, sports drinks, clear tea, and black coffee. Clear liquids **DO NOT** include alcohol, orange juice, broth, milk, coffee creamer, or infant formula.
- **DO** take your important pills as directed by your surgeon or nurse the day of surgery with only a sip of water.
- **DO** bathe or shower with an over-the-counter antibacterial soap and brush your teeth. If your hair is long, pull it back with an elastic. Follow any additional instructions provided by your surgeon.
- **DO** wear comfortable, loose clothing that is easy to get on and off and can fit over a bandage if needed.
- **DO** be prepared to change into a surgical gown and remove all personal clothing including underwear and undergarments.
- **DO** arrange for a responsible adult to take you home. You should also arrange for an adult to stay with you for 24 hours after you return home. (Do not bring children under 12.)
- **DO NOT** drink milk 6 hours before your anticipated check-in time. This includes cow, soy, almond, cashew, coconut, or rice milk, and coffee creamer.
- Note: Infants may drink formula up to 6 hours before check-in time. Breastfed infants must finish their last feeding 4 hours before check-in time.
- **DO NOT** eat any solid food after 11:00pm the night before your surgery.
- **DO NOT** shave the surgical area.
- **DO NOT** wear makeup, nail polish, metal hair accessories, or piercings, or bring any valuables.
- **DO NOT** use gum, breath mints, vitamins, chewing tobacco, smoking tobacco, alcohol, illegal drugs, or vapes after 11:00pm the night before your surgery.
- **DO NOT** have any food OR drink after 11:00 pm the night prior to your surgery. If you have gastroparesis or have breathed fluid into your lungs (aspirated) while under anesthesia.

If you feel ill before the procedure

Some illnesses can cause problems during surgery. Be sure to tell your doctor if you have any of the following:

- Fever
- Sore throat
- Diarrhea
- Cough
- Congestion
- Anxiety
- Chicken pox, shingles, or exposure within the last 2 weeks
- Any other concerns that may interfere with your surgery
- COVID-19 symptoms (loss of taste, smell, difficulty breathing, fever above 100.4)

What to bring

Be sure to bring these things with you to the facility:

- A list of your medications and the dosage you take (This should include over-the-counter medications and supplements.)
- A case for your eyeglasses, contact lenses, dentures, or hearing aids
- Your photo ID and your insurance, Medicare, or Medicaid card
- Cash or a credit card for co-pays and prescriptions (The cost of prescriptions cannot be added to your bill.)
- A copy of your advance directive
- Your asthma or lung inhaler, if you use one
- Your CPAP mask, if you use one, with all necessary tubing and settings.
- Your portable oxygen machine, if you use oxygen
- A small bag with toiletries (If you are staying overnight, you can leave the bag in the car and have your support person bring it in after the surgery.)

What to leave at home

Do not bring anything that can get in the way of a clean surgery environment, or get lost or misplaced. This includes:

- All jewelry and piercings
- Any valuable items

Who can come with you

Most patients find it helpful to have someone to support you while you are in surgery, including:

- **One or 2 adults who are comfortable answering medical questions.** One adult should stay within the facility during your entire stay to receive instructions from the surgical team.
- **A responsible adult to drive you home.** You will not be allowed to drive yourself home.

Check with your facility for current visitor guidelines.

What if I need to cancel?

If you must cancel your surgery for any reason, call the surgery facility AND your surgeon right away.

Advance directives

An advance directive is a document that helps ensure the care you receive is in line with your values and wishes, even if you can't communicate at the time. You can name who you would like to speak for you, as well as what type of care you would like to have or not have.

Intermountain offers all adult patients a chance to complete an advance directive. It doesn't depend on your current health, and it doesn't mean your doctors expect your health to get worse. Your healthcare providers can give you the forms. If you have an advance directive, please bring a copy with you to the hospital.

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