

Preparing for Surgery

Knowing what to do before surgery can help you and your family face the day with more confidence and clarity. Use this fact sheet to take notes on how to prepare. You can write in the information your surgical team provides as you receive it.

Pre-registration

As soon as your surgery is scheduled, you need to phone in to pre-register. You can call Monday through Friday between _____ (times).

- Where to call: _____

During pre-registration, you'll go over the following:

- **Your personal information** such as your name, age, and how to contact you.
- **Your payment information.** Have your insurance information available. It is your responsibility to pre-authorize the procedure with your insurance company. **If you need payment assistance**, we may be able to help. You can ask to be directed to that office.

Health history

Before surgery, you need to provide information about your health history, including your past surgeries. Have a list of your current prescriptions and over-the-counter medications ready. During pre-registration, you will be told how to give this information:

- You may be asked to call the surgery facility and report your health history to a nurse.
Phone: _____, OR
- You may be emailed a link where you can complete your health history securely online. If you do this, a nurse may also phone you to review it.

Pre-surgery phone call

One to three days before your surgery, you need to speak with a pre-screening nurse. The nurse will review your information, tell you what time to come to the facility, and give other last-minute instructions.

Your surgery

- Name of surgery _____
- Surgeon _____
- Surgery facility _____
- Where to go _____
- Date _____
- Time _____

Fill in this information as you get it during various visits and phone calls. Although your surgery is scheduled to begin at a specific time of day, **sometimes hospital schedules have to change at the last minute.** Don't worry if your surgery starts a little before or after your scheduled time.

If you have any special needs, tell the nurse during this call. For example, tell the nurse if you need to communicate in a language other than English or if you have a chronic condition that requires special care.

For your pre-surgery phone call:

- You may be instructed to call in. Phone: _____
When to call: _____, OR
- You may be instructed to expect a call from a nurse. If you have not spoken with the pre-screening nurse by the day before surgery, please call in.

Medications

You may need to stop taking some of your usual medications before surgery. Your doctor or nurse will tell you which ones. **Be sure to write these instructions here:**

- **Medications to STOP taking** before surgery.
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
- **Medications to KEEP taking.** Take with a sip of water.
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____

What to do and not do before surgery

- Do NOT eat or drink anything after midnight** (or ___ p.m.) the night before surgery. It's dangerous to have anything in your stomach when having anesthesia.
- Do NOT use gum**, breath mints, vitamins, chewing tobacco, smoking tobacco, alcohol, or illegal drugs within four hours before coming in for surgery.
- Do NOT** _____
- DO arrange for a responsible adult to take you home.** You should also arrange for someone to stay with you for 24 hours after you return home.
- DO bathe and shampoo** before coming in with an over-the-counter antibacterial soap. If your hair is long, pull it back with an elastic.
- DO wear comfortable, loose clothing** that's easy to get on and off, and will fit over a bandage if needed.
- DO** _____

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 last 2 weeks
- Any other concerns that may interfere with your surgery
- _____

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 provided or withheld.

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.

What to bring

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

- A list of all your medications and the dosage you take — including 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 your co-pays and prescriptions (the cost of prescriptions cannot be added to your bill)
- A copy of your advance directives
- Your asthma or lung inhaler, if you use one
- Your CPAP mask and tubing, if you use them
- Your oxygen machine, if you use one
- If you may be staying overnight, also bring a small bag with toiletries — leave this in the car and have your family bring it in after the surgery
- _____

What to leave at home

Do not bring anything that could get lost, or that could get in the way of a clean surgery environment.

- Leave all valuables and jewelry at home
- Do not wear makeup, nail polish, metal hair accessories, or piercings

Who can come with you

Most patients find it helpful to have a supportive friend or family member nearby while they're in the surgery facility.

- One or two friends or family members** (but no children under 12). One family member should stay within the facility during your whole stay to receive instructions from the surgical team.
- A responsible adult to drive you home.** You will not be allowed to drive yourself home.

Cancellation

If for any reason you must cancel your surgery, notify both the surgery facility and your surgeon immediately.