

Discharge from Outpatient Surgery



You are scheduled for outpatient surgery. This is also called same-day or ambulatory surgery. This sheet will help you learn what to expect after your surgery.

Going home

You will be told when you can go home after your surgery. If you were given medicine (anesthesia) to make you sleepy and prevent pain, you may still feel drowsy or have an upset stomach.

- Be sure to have an adult family member or friend ready to drive you home.
- If you need crutches or other tools, be sure you are shown how to use them. If you can, have a family member or friend listen to the instructions with you.
- Have someone ready to stay with you for at least the first night.

Recovering at home

At home, follow all instructions you've been given.

- Don't drive or make any big decisions for at least 24 hours after getting any type of sedation or anesthesia.
- Keep any dressing or bandage you have clean and dry. Know when you can change or remove the bandage. Ask when you can shower or take a bath again.
- Follow your healthcare provider's instructions about food and drink. At first, your stomach may be upset. You may not feel like eating much. Drink plenty of clear liquids, such as water, apple juice, or flat ginger ale.
- Follow instructions for treating constipation.
- Unless you're told not to, get up and move around. This helps you heal. Walking a few times a day is often recommended.
- Do any deep breathing or coughing exercises as instructed. These help keep your lungs clear.
- Be sure to follow all after-care instructions.
- Don't start exercising again until you have checked with your healthcare provider. This includes exercise such as running or weightlifting.
- Follow your healthcare provider's advice on when you can drive again.
- Check with your healthcare provider when you can return to work.

Taking medicines

You may be given pain medicines or other medicines after surgery.

- Take pain medicine at regular times as instructed. Do not wait until pain gets bad before you take it. Take only as much pain medicine as prescribed.
- Don't drive, use power tools or other dangerous machines, or drink alcohol while taking pain medicine.

- If you have been given antibiotics, take them until they are gone or you are told to stop. If you have trouble taking them or have side effects, call your healthcare provider.

Following up

Someone from your healthcare team may call to check how you're doing. Tell them if you have any problems or questions.

When to call your healthcare provider

Call if you have any of the following:

- You can't keep food or fluids down
- You have not urinated within the time your healthcare team noted
- You have not had a bowel movement within the time your healthcare team noted
- Your bandage soaks through (some bleeding and leakage is normal)
- Your pain gets worse and is not eased by pain medicine

Call if you have any of these signs of infection:

- Fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher, or as directed by your provider
- Bleeding or swelling that increases
- Bad smell, warmth, or green or yellow discharge from the cut (incision)
- A red, hard, hot, or painful area around the cut or on your legs

Call 911

Call 911 or seek emergency services if you experience:

- Shortness of breath
- Chest pain

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