

# Pre-Surgery Checklist



You are scheduled to have surgery. The healthcare staff will try to make your stay comfortable. Use the guidelines below to remind yourself what to do before surgery. Be sure to follow any specific pre-op instructions from your surgeon or nurse.

## Preparing for surgery

- If you are having abdominal surgery, ask if you need to do to clear your bowel and if so, how to do it.
- Tell your surgeon if you have any allergies, including to any medicines, such as over-the-counter medicines, latex, or foods.
- Ask your surgeon if you might need a blood transfusion during surgery and, if so, how to prepare for it. In some cases, you can donate your own blood before surgery, or a family member can do a directed donation. If needed, this blood can be given (transfused) to you during or after surgery.
- Arrange for an adult family member or friend to drive you home after surgery. If possible, have someone ready to help you at home as you recover.
- Call the surgeon if you get a cold, fever, sore throat, diarrhea, or other health problem just before surgery. Your surgeon can decide whether or not to postpone the surgery.

## Medicines

- Tell your surgeon about all medicines you take, including prescription and over-the-counter products, such as herbal remedies and vitamins. Ask if you should continue taking them, or if they should be stopped and for how long.
- If you take ibuprofen, naproxen, aspirin, clopidogrel, warfarin, or any other blood thinners (anticoagulants) ask your surgeon whether you should stop taking them and how long before surgery you should stop. Also ask when they will be safe to start taking them again.
- You may be told to take antibiotics just before surgery to prevent infection. If so, follow directions carefully on how to take them.
- If you are told to take blood thinners to help prevent blood clots after surgery, be sure to follow the directions on how to take them.

## Stop smoking

If you smoke, healing may take longer. So at least 4 weeks before surgery, stop smoking. Talk with your healthcare provider if you need help to stop smoking.

## Bathing or showering before surgery

- If instructed, wash with antibacterial soap. Afterward, don't use lotions, oils, or powders on your incision.
- If you are having surgery on the head, you may be asked to shampoo with antibacterial soap. Follow instructions for doing so.

## Don't remove hair from the surgery site

Don't shave hair from the incision site, unless you are given specific directions to do so. Usually, if hair needs to be removed, it will be done at the healthcare facility right before surgery.

## **Don't eat or drink**

- Follow any directions you are given for not eating or drinking before surgery. If you don't follow directions about when to stop eating and drinking, your procedure may be postponed or rescheduled for another day. This is a safety issue.
- You can brush your teeth and rinse your mouth, but don't swallow any water.

## **Day of surgery**

- Don't wear makeup. Don't use perfume, deodorant, or hairspray. Remove nail polish and artificial nails.
- Leave jewelry (including rings), watches, and other valuables at home.
- Don't wear contact lenses. Bring your glasses.
- Be sure to bring health insurance cards or forms and a photo ID.
- Bring a list of your medicines (include the name, dose, how often you take them, and the time last dose was taken).
- Arrive on time at the hospital or surgery facility.

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