

Preparing for Surgery Checklist

Having surgery? There are things you can do to get ready and help you heal more quickly afterward. Talk with your health care professional about these steps.

Weeks or Months Before Surgery

At your doctor's office:

- Go to any scheduled checkups.** You may need to have a physical exam and tests a week or two before surgery. Tell your health care team about any changes in your health, even minor colds or infections.
- Discuss your medications.** Tell your doctor which medications, vitamins, and supplements you are taking. Ask what you should and should not take before surgery. Your doctor may prescribe antibiotics and pain relievers ahead of time.
- Discuss nutrition and exercise.** Your doctor may suggest a special diet and exercise plan before your surgery. Exercising can improve your blood flow and help you heal after surgery.
- Read consent forms closely.** Your forms may describe your surgery, who will do it, the risks, benefits, and alternative treatments. Ask questions if you have any. You can also write down your questions before your visit so you do not forget anything.
- Learn about recovery.** Ask your health care team what recovery will be like and what help you may need at home.

At home:

- If you smoke or vape, try to quit.** Quitting can lower some of the risks of surgery and help you heal faster. Any period of not smoking or vaping before surgery can help. But it's best if you quit at least 4 weeks before surgery. Also ask those around you not to smoke or vape near you.
- If you drink a lot of alcohol, try to quit.** People who drink three or more alcoholic drinks per day have more complications after surgery than people who drink less. Quitting drinking before surgery could lower your risk of complications.
- Exercise and eat well to build your strength.** Try to stick to the workouts and healthy food you discussed with your doctor. Even walking can be helpful.
- Plan for help during and after surgery.** Ask someone you trust to be there to take you home after your surgery. It can also be helpful for this person to be there with you during your hospital stay, and for someone to help out at home afterward.
- Set up your home for recovery.** Buy food and any supplies you may need. Clean your home to make it easier to move around after surgery. Put things you use often at waist or shoulder height. It may be easier if you don't have to bend over or climb stairs.

Notes:



Day Before Surgery

- Review directions for eating and drinking.** You may be asked to fast before the surgery, except for clear liquids (such as water, broth, tea, and sports drinks) up to 2 hours before.
- Pack the following items:**
 - A photo ID and insurance card if you have insurance
 - Contact information for your primary care doctor
 - Contact information for a family member or friend so the hospital staff can provide updates, if desired
 - A list of medications that you take, including vitamins and supplements
 - A list of any health conditions that you have
 - Anything else you will need if you are staying overnight, including clean clothes, toiletries, and a case for glasses, contact lenses, or dentures
- Check in with your helpers.** Confirm your plans for a ride home and any other help you have planned.

Day of Surgery

- Take a shower.** Wash your hair and body, but do not shave. Use a clean towel to dry off.
- Wear clean, comfortable clothes.** Loose clothing is best.
- Keep skin bare.** Do not wear makeup or put on any lotion.
- Take off jewelry.** All jewelry usually needs to be removed before surgery.
- If you wear glasses or use a hearing aid, wear them.** You'll want to be able to see and hear clearly.
- Bring all the items you packed.** Leave anything else of value at home.

Notes:

Learn more: www.acog.org/womens-health/faqs/preparing-for-surgery

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