



## Preparing for Surgery

### Helpful Tips to Prepare you for Surgery

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#### Things to Consider as You Prepare for Surgery

Surgery is a major decision you must make with your physician. There are some factors you should consider as you decide whether or not surgery is a good option for you.

1. *Expectations* – you and your surgeon should discuss what improvements you can expect. There are some conditions that cannot be improved with surgery. You may still have these symptoms after surgery.
2. *Risks* – Every operation has risks. These vary from person to person depending upon your other medical conditions. You need to discuss with your physician the risks of your procedure. You may need to see a primary care physician if you have multiple medical problems to determine how safe surgery is for you.

The following are general recommendations. It is a good idea to check with your surgeon to confirm that they are appropriate for you.

#### Preparing for Surgery

Once you have decided you want surgery, you need to prepare in the weeks before surgery. You should inform your doctor about:

- EVERY medication you are taking, including pain medication or herbal supplements. Some of these can create bleeding problems, and may need to be stopped a few days to weeks prior to your procedure.
- Allergies to medications, foods, latex, adhesive tape, different types of soap or iodine.

Your general health and nutritional state before your surgery impacts on your ability to fight infections and heal after surgery. Things you can do to improve your health include:

- Taking all of your prescribed medications on a regular basis, **and** making sure you have seen your primary physician recently.
- Stop smoking! Try to do this as early as possible since in the early days after quitting smoking, you may produce large amounts of mucus in your lungs and will find yourself coughing to clear your lungs and windpipe. Kicking the habit can significantly improve your ability to heal. It will also reduce your risk for mesh complications if graft material will be used.
- If you are overweight, you may want to think about postponing surgery until you have lost some weight. In addition to being healthier for you, this reduces your anesthetic and operative risk.
- Pelvic floor exercises are an important part of strengthening muscles before and after your surgery. You should continue to do your Kegel exercises prior to your surgery.



## Immediately Before Surgery – What to Expect

1. You may have a pre-operative visit with your physician where you will sign the consent forms for your surgery. At this time, ask your physician any questions you may have about the procedure. If you have concerns about blood transfusion, this is the time to discuss them with your physician.
2. You may also have a pre-operative visit with someone from the anesthesia department. They will review your medications and ask some questions about your general health. If you are in good health you may meet the anesthesia team the morning of surgery instead.
3. You will be given instructions regarding diet prior to your surgery. Some physicians recommend a “bowel prep” which can be a laxative or an enema the day before your procedure. Ask your doctor about this.
4. If you are going to have an anesthetic, you will be instructed to not eat or drink after midnight or for a minimum of six hours prior to your surgery.

## Questions to Ask Your Doctor at Your Pre-op Visit

Many women are very anxious at their pre-op visit and forget to ask questions. The following is a list of common questions to review with your surgeon or their support team:

- Should I do bowel prep before surgery?
  - Enema
  - Laxative
- Should I shave my pubic hair?
  - In general, shaving a day or two before surgery should be avoided as it is associated with a greater risk for skin infection. Your surgeon may choose to shave near the incision when you are on the operating table.
- Can I get my post-op medication prescriptions ahead of surgery?
  - This makes the trip home from the hospital a bit easier.
- How much time should I plan to be off from work?
  - Be sure to bring or mail all disability insurance forms as soon as possible
  - Remember to find out if a return to work release form is needed from your employer
- What is the typical length of the hospital stay for my procedure?
  - How many nights will I be at the hospital?
  - Is there a standard discharge time?
  - Can I arrange a late discharge- my ride can't come until after work?