

## Preparing for surgery

- Good communication can help prevent surprises
- Between 48 and 72 hours before your surgery, a member of our staff will contact you and go over the arrangements. We'll also run through a checklist of do's and don'ts, including what to bring with you on the day of your procedure. And we'll ask you to verify the **list of medications** you are taking. Avoiding unexpected drug interactions is important and we need your full cooperation in advising us of ALL drugs you are taking – prescription, over-the-counter, recreational as well as vitamins, supplements and herbal remedies.
- We also ask that you alert us immediately if you develop a cold, fever, respiratory infection or other illness prior to surgery. Women should inform their surgeon if they think they may be pregnant.

## The days before surgery

- Do not eat or drink anything after midnight the night before your surgery, unless your doctor has directed you to do otherwise. Food in your stomach can cause serious complications during surgery and could result in cancellation of the procedure.
- Avoid alcohol and tobacco 24 hours prior to your surgery.
- Please make arrangements to have a responsible adult drive you home after your procedure and stay with you that night. If you take a taxi, you must bring someone with you other than the driver. **YOU MAY NOT DRIVE HOME AFTER RECEIVING SEDATION OF ANY KIND!** Discuss with your doctor what medication to take in the days leading up to surgery. No aspirin or blood thinning drugs should be taken within three days of surgery unless told otherwise by a surgeon. If in doubt, please ask.
- Fill any prescriptions your doctor may have given you during your pre-surgery visit before the actual day of surgery. When you are done with your surgery, it is best to go home to rest and not have to worry about picking up medication on the way. Often you will need to start your pain medication immediately to ensure your comfort and ability to rest

## The morning of surgery

- Keep your stomach empty! This includes chewing gum and eating breath mints. You may brush your teeth and gargle with mouthwash.
- Bathe or shower the morning of your surgery, but do not use hair spray, body lotion or apply makeup (especially mascara or lipstick).
- Leave jewelry and any valuables at home.
- Wear loose-fitting, comfortable clothing and shoes. Upon arrival, we will provide you with a gown, robe and slippers.
- Bring a storage case for glasses, contact lenses and/or a hearing aid.
- If you take medication on a daily basis, remember to bring it in the original bottle.
- If you regularly take heart or blood pressure medication, you may be told to take them on the morning of surgery. If so, take them with only a sip of water.
- Bring a form of Photo ID, medical information such as insurance forms, insurance cards, and any pertinent test results.
- Bring a form of payment if applicable. See our [Billing and Insurance](#) page for more information.
- Parents or guardians of minors must be present with the patient at arrival time to sign paperwork and should remain in the facility during their entire visit. Bring a copy of any guardianship papers.
- You will have the opportunity to speak with an anesthesiologist (see “A word about anesthesia” below).
- Arrive at your scheduled arrival time, which can be one to one-and-a-half hours before your surgery is scheduled to begin. We need this extra time to prepare you for surgery. We do our best to stay on time, but, we thank you for understanding if your surgeon runs a bit behind schedule.

## Following surgery

- After your surgery, our staff will give you a set of instructions covering what you need to eat and drink, any restrictions on your activities and any medications you should be taking.
- It is our policy not to release patients until they are fully conscious and meet the criteria for discharge. Again, we require that every patient have a ride home. In addition, patients should not be left alone for 24 hours after surgery. Plan ahead and bring a friend or a relative.
- For 24 hours after your surgery, do not drive, operate machinery, sign important papers or make critical decisions.
- One of our nurses will call you within 48-72 hours after surgery. Our goal is to check on your well-being and to answer any questions you may have. But you don't have to wait for our call. If you have questions, please call us immediately at the number listed on your post-op instruction sheet.

## A word about anesthesia

- Pain is personal. Not everyone handles pain in the same way. Not everyone who has a particular procedure feels the same level of pain.
- Discuss pain management with your medical team. Ask questions. We all want to find the best way to minimize any discomfort you feel and it starts with choosing the right anesthetic for you.
- We offer several approaches:
  - Local Anesthesia* – You remain awake but the area being operated on is made numb by injection. The numbness wears off rapidly after the procedure is completed.
  - Monitored Care* – In conjunction with a local anesthesia, you will be given pain medication and/or a sedative to keep you comfortable and relaxed. Patients usually recover quickly.

*Regional Anesthesia* – Spinal, epidural or caudal anesthesia numbs an entire area of your body, usually the pelvis, abdomen and lower extremities. A nerve block may be used to numb a single extremity. The patient remains conscious but may have little memory of the procedure.

*General Anesthetics* – An intravenous injection of medication and inhalation of gases puts the patient to sleep. Your whole body is free of pain. Recovery may take as long as the procedure itself, often an hour or more after surgery.

- The most common side effects of all anesthesia are nausea, vomiting, sore throat, headache, muscle aches and fatigue. Symptoms may last for a few days.
- All anesthesia is administered by a board certified anesthesiologist. You will have an opportunity to speak with an anesthesiologist the morning of your procedure and get answers to any questions you may have.