

Fast Facts

Surgery

- Procedure = series of pre-defined steps are followed to achieve a desired result
- Surgery = type of procedure in which an incision is made in the skin to access deeper tissues and organs
 - Non-surgical = a procedure that doesn't require an incision
- Minor surgery = when skin, mucous membranes or connective tissue are resected (ex. tooth extractions or biopsies)
- Major surgery = when a larger resection is completed (ex. entering a body cavity, removal of organs or normal body anatomy is altered)
 - The advancement of technology has seen smaller tools and refined procedures allowing surgeries to become less invasive, which reduces the risk of infection and recovery times
 - Emergent surgeries need to be done immediately
 - Majority of surgeries are elective, or planned and non-emergent
- With any type, it is important to compare the risks of having a surgery to the benefits before

Questions to Ask

- Why do you need to have the procedure?
- What are the benefits?
- What are the risks?
- What are possible complications and side effects? If you have complications or side effects, when should you contact your surgeon versus when should you seek emergency medical treatment?
- What are the basic steps involved?
- Is there more than one way to do the procedure?
- Which way does your surgeon perform it?
- Why does your surgeon choose that way?
- Where will the surgery will be performed (hospital, outpatient surgery center or in the surgeon's office)?
- Will you be able to go home or need to be admitted to the hospital?
- Will anesthesia be needed to complete the surgery? If so, what type?
- When do you need to stop eating/drinking before surgery?
- Do you need to stop any of your medication prior to surgery? If so, when and for how long?
- What does the recovery process look like?
- What is the timeline for doing certain activities after surgery?
- Do you need any special equipment or assistance during recovery?

Tips to Know

- If you don't understand something, keep asking questions until you do
- Take notes during doctor's appointments or bring a family member/friend with you to take notes
- Write down any questions before the appointment
- Have your doctor write down any information/instructions
- Ask where you can find printed material about your condition (often they have material they can give you)
- Be prepared to answer the same questions repeatedly (this is how important information is verified to ensure your safety and wellbeing)
- Make a list of medications (prescription and over-the-counter), herbs and supplements
- Get a second opinion from another surgeon (remember to bring a copy of your medical records from your first healthcare provider so the second doesn't repeat the same tests and procedures)
- Follow all instructions that are given to you
- Set up any necessary home care/equipment
- Complete any special preparations (ex. tests that need to be completed or eating a special diet)
- Sign any legal documents (ex. informed consent and insurance paperwork)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -What can you do to help with the recovery process? -What type and level of pain/discomfort should you expect? -What treatment options are available to manage your pain/discomfort? -What are alternative treatment options that don't involve having the surgery? -If you don't have the surgery, will your pain/symptoms get worse or is it possible for your condition to improve on its own? -How much will the surgery cost? Is any of it covered by your insurance? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -If you use a CPAP machine, know your settings in order to be able to share them with the anesthesiologist -Stop smoking, don't drink alcohol or use illicit drugs because they can affect your recovery process -Be sure the surgeon marks on your skin over the site they will be operating on the day of surgery -During recovery, keep your pain under control so that you are comfortable enough to be able to move around (increased activity level is associated with less recovery time)
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