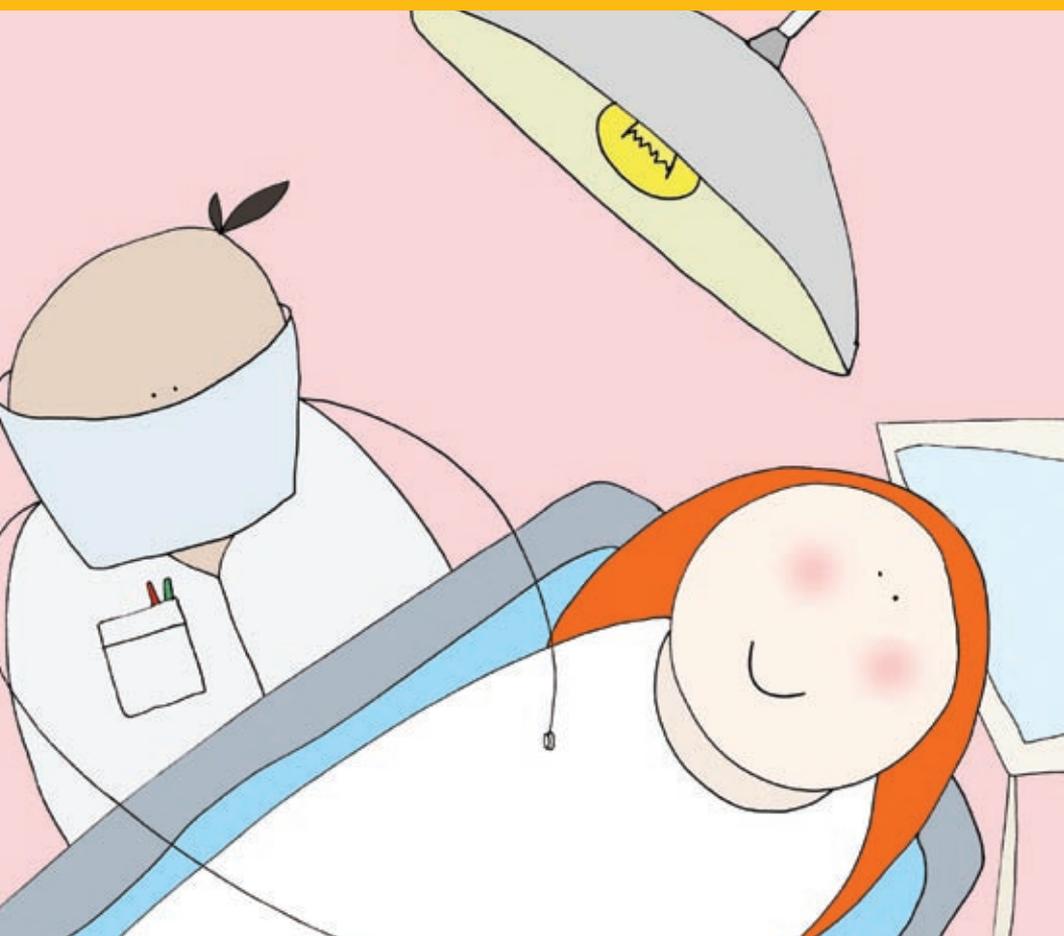


Are You Getting Ready For Surgery?

Ask Questions & Speak Up!



Getting ready for surgery? Ask Questions & Speak Up!

Everyone has a part in making health care safe – doctors, health care leaders, nurses, and you, the patient. You can play an important part in making your surgery safe by becoming an active, involved and informed member of your health care team.



Here's what you can do to help make your surgery safe.

Before You Get to the Hospital

✓ **Before you arrive at the hospital for your surgery there are some questions you need to ask your doctor, such as:**

- What kind of surgery am I having?
What exactly will you be doing to me?
- How long will the surgery take?
- How long will I be in the hospital?
- Will someone need to stay with me after I come home from the hospital?
- How long will it take me to feel better after the surgery?

Make sure that you and your doctor agree and are clear on what will be done. If you are not sure, speak up.

Before You Get to the Hospital

✓ Medicines and your Surgery

- Make a list of all your medicines (you may want to ask someone to help).
- Take your medicine list with you to the hospital.
- Check with your doctor to see whether there are any medicines you should not take before your surgery.

✓ Food and Surgery

- Check with your doctor about what you can eat and drink before your surgery.

✓ Questions

- Write down your questions or concerns instead of trying to remember them.

✓ Get a Friend to Help You

- Make travel plans to or from the hospital with a reliable family member or friend.
- Bring a friend or family member with you to the hospital. If this is not possible, ask the hospital if they have a patient advocate (say add-vah-cut) that can help you.

✓ Before you Leave Home

- Before leaving home, shower and wash your hair, and take off any finger or toenail polish. Also, do not wear any makeup.
- It is a good idea to leave any valuables, like jewelry, at home.

At the Hospital or Medical Facility

Before the surgery

✓ **When you get to the hospital it is important to know what will happen. Here is a list of things to expect when you get to the hospital:**

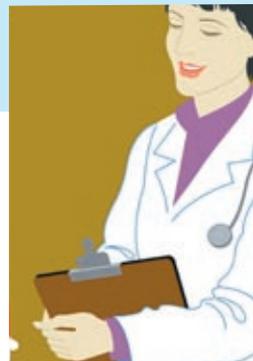
- You will be asked to sign a paper called “informed consent”.

The informed consent paper explains that:

- = you and your doctor have talked about the surgery
- = you understand what will happen during the surgery, and
- = that you understand the risks or chances of something bad happening.

- The nurses taking care of you will make sure you are the right patient. They will also make sure that you are having the kind of surgery you are supposed to on the expected part of your body. You may be asked these questions a lot, but remember it is for your own safety!
- Your doctor or nurse will mark the correct spot on your body where the surgery is to take place. This is an important step in protecting your safety and preventing errors. Make sure only the part of your body where the surgery will take place is marked!

You may be asked a lot of questions, but remember it is for your own safety!



At the Hospital or Medical Facility

After the surgery

✓ **During your hospital stay, there are two ways you can help the hospital team give you the best care. Make sure everyone washes their hand and that everyone is paying attention. If not, speak up!**

1. The most common problem after surgery is infection.

Use these tips to keep from getting an infection:

- Wash your hands often, especially after going to the bathroom.
- Remind doctors and nurses to wash their hands.
- If you have a drainage tube or dressing, keep it dry. If it works loose or gets wet, tell the nurse.
- Tell friends and family that are sick, “Please don’t visit me right now.”

2. Paying attention:

- Be very careful when getting out of bed. Ask for help.
- Make sure the person who gives you medicine checks your ID bracelet. Are they giving the medicine to the right person?
- If the medicine or pill looks different from usual, ask what it is.
- If something does not seem right, **speak up!** If you have any questions or concerns about any medicine you should talk about these with your doctor or nurse.

Going Home from the Hospital

✓ **Before you leave the hospital, here are a few things you should know:**

Medicines:

- Show the doctor or nurse the list of medicines you were taking before your surgery.
- Ask questions. Learn how to take any new medicines.
- What is the medicine for?
- How often and when do I take it (with food or without)?
- What side effects might happen and what should I do?

Follow-up Visits:

- Ask the doctor or nurse to make a list of appointments you need to schedule.
- After you get home, call your primary care doctor to see when you need to come for a visit.
- Ask your doctor when you can return to your normal activities (work, exercise, travel).

Home Health Services:

- Your doctor may order a nurse or therapist to visit you at home.
- **Speak up** if you need help choosing a home health care company or in contacting them.

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