

# NIH Clinical Center Patient Education Materials

## Preparing for Inpatient Surgery

### **Preparation for inpatient surgery**

Your provider (physician, physician assistant, nurse practitioner) may order tests such as lab work, an electrocardiogram (EKG), and a chest X-ray before your surgery to check for any potential issues. If necessary, your provider may request a specialist to evaluate your results and make recommendations. Your provider will evaluate what type of anesthesia you should receive and if you will need a blood transfusion.

You will have an appointment in the Pre-Anesthesia Clinic where an Anesthesiologist/Nurse Anesthetist and a nurse will meet with you to discuss what you will experience on the day of your surgery. They will give you any special instructions to prepare for your procedure (for example, any dietary/medication restrictions or laboratory tests).

Please consult with your provider if you are taking medications that may increase your risk of bleeding, including aspirin, warfarin, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (such as ibuprofen, naproxen, etc.). Tylenol or acetaminophen may be allowed.

### **Consent**

Your surgeon will review your pre-surgery results and discuss the details of your surgery with you. Your surgeon will answer your questions and ask you to sign a consent for the surgery. You must give your written consent before any surgery can be performed.

You may also be asked to sign a blood transfusion consent. Not all surgeries require you to receive a blood transfusion. Your surgeon will decide based on your individual case. Please tell your provider if you have had reactions in the past to blood transfusions or if you have any religious prohibitions.

### **Night before surgery**

#### Hygiene

Please shower the night before surgery, and clean yourself thoroughly. Generally, soap and water will do, but, in some situations, we may ask you to use a special cleanser. Do not apply any fragranced soap, lotion, or spray during or after your shower. If you have an I.V. (intravenous line) or venous access device, please ask the nurse to cover it so that it will not get wet.

#### Fasting

Do not eat or drink anything after midnight the night before surgery. It is important to follow these instructions to decrease your risk of vomiting during the operation. The risk of vomiting increases with sedation and can cause serious complications. Your nurse will give you any medication(s) that you need to take the morning of your surgery.

#### Bowel Preparation Regimen

For some surgeries, your provider may order “bowel prep” (bowel preparation) to clean out your intestines so that they can see the walls of your intestines. Starting at lunch the day before your

procedure, you will only be allowed to eat and drink clear liquids. After your clear-liquid dinner you must drink a laxative drink to cause bowel movements. Your bowel movements should be clear before your surgery. If they are not, please inform your nurse. Drink plenty of water before midnight on the night before your surgery.

### Belongings

We recommend that your family takes responsibility for your valuables. You can also ask Admissions to lock up your belongings. The ICU does not have storage space. Your nurse can help you with this process.

### **Morning of Surgery**

#### Preparation

Before your procedure/surgery, your nurse will ask you to put on TED stockings (compression stockings) to help prevent blood clots, a possible complication of surgery. Your nurse will apply a dressing(s) to protect your skin

#### Antibiotics

Your provider may prescribe an antibiotic for you during and after your surgery to prevent infection. Some surgeries (for example, abdominal surgeries) put you at a higher risk for infection.

### **Before the surgery**

Before your surgery, you will meet your surgical team, including your surgeon, operating room nurses, and PACU nurses. If you are going to have anesthesia (sedation), you will also meet an anesthesiologist and/or a nurse anesthetist who will examine you and administer the anesthesia during the surgery. The surgical team will take care of you before and after the operation.

Before the operation, you will be brought into the pre-op room and helped onto a stretcher. The operating room nurse will ask for your name and date of birth as well as take your vital signs and ask several pre-surgery questions. Some of these will include questions about allergies, medications, and diet. Your provider will also make sure that you signed an operative consent and confirm today's surgery. An I.V. line will be placed in one of the veins in your arm or hand. If you already have a venous access device, please let your nurse know. The operating room nurse will go with you to the operating room where you will have your surgery.

### **Going to the PACU (Post Anesthesia Care Unit) or recovery room after surgery**

Upon arrival in the PACU, your nurse will frequently check your vital signs and dressing. Your recovery time in the PACU depends on the type of surgery performed, the amount of medication given, and your status after the surgery. After your recovery in the PACU, you will be transported back to your unit.

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