



# Surgery Safety Tips

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The prospect of undergoing surgery can be scary and overwhelming. Becoming well-informed about your condition and surgery may help you achieve a more satisfactory outcome and can help ensure your safety during your procedure. Of course, in the case of surgical emergencies, planning and preparation are not possible.

## Questions to ask your surgeon before the day of surgery

- What surgery are you recommending?
- Why do I need this surgery?
- Are there alternatives to surgery?
- What are the benefits of having this surgery?
- What are the risks of having this surgery?
- How much postoperative pain will there be from the incision?
- What will happen if I do not have this surgery?
- Where can I go for a second opinion?
- What is your experience with this procedure?
- How much will the surgery cost?
- Where will the surgery be done?
- What kind of anesthesia will be used?
- Can I eat or drink anything the day before and/or the day of my surgery?
- How long can I expect to be in the hospital?
- Where should I go when I arrive at the hospital, and what should I bring with me?
- How long will it take for me to recover?
- What if I still have pain or I am still experiencing symptoms after surgery?
- When do I schedule my post-surgery follow-up appointment?

- When can I resume normal activities?

## Safety tips for the day of surgery

As a surgical patient, there are proactive steps you can take to help ensure that your surgery is as safe as possible. While most of the following are standard or mandated practices, it is important that as a surgical patient, you are aware of these procedures.

- Make sure there is agreement between you and your healthcare team about the exact type of procedure you will be undergoing.
- Thoroughly read all the medical forms, including the consent form, and make sure that you understand them and that they are accurate before you sign them.
- Have a responsible family member or friend accompany you to preoperative surgery visits and on the day of your surgery. If you are unable to voice concerns, he or she can act on your behalf.
- Verify the information on your patient identification bracelet. If anything is incorrect, ask that it be corrected.
- Marking the part of the body undergoing surgery is mandated by hospital protocol. In the unlikely circumstance that this precautionary step is not taken, ask to have the site marked with an indelible marker.
- Make sure somebody asks you to state your full name, Social Security number or date of birth, and the site for your procedure, prior to entering the operating room.