



SENIOR HEALTH

Surgery

HOW TO PLAN FOR IT

Whether the surgery you're planning for is necessary or elective, your preparation will be important to its success and the healing process. With any surgery, there are key things to consider, including pre-existing conditions, such as heart ailments, and the risk of surgery for your age group.

- ▶ Begin by seeing your family doctor. Find out about your illness and treatment choices.
- ▶ Find a board-certified surgeon. Call the doctor's office to confirm that he or she is certified by a surgical board.
- ▶ Choose an experienced surgeon who operates on a regular basis.
- ▶ Seek another opinion from a second doctor, and don't be afraid to tell your surgeon.

IMPORTANT QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE CONSIDERING SURGERY

- ▶ What is the specific medical problem?
- ▶ What are the chances of survival with and without the surgery?
- ▶ Are there other forms of treatment to try before surgery?
- ▶ What are the risks of the surgical procedure you are considering?
- ▶ How much will the operation cost? Is there adequate insurance to cover all of the costs, including any special tests?
- ▶ How much experience has the surgeon had with this kind of surgery? What percentage of the operations were successful?

- ▶ How will the operation affect your lifestyle and overall health? Are there any activities you will not be able to do after surgery?
- ▶ How long of a recovery period is expected? Is physical therapy involved? Are there any diet or exercise restrictions?

PREPARING FOR SURGERY

Doctor's Instructions

- ▶ Follow your doctor's instructions for pre- and post-operative care. Ask for clarification in advance.
- ▶ To reduce bleeding and bruising, your surgeon may ask you to stop taking aspirin and Vitamin E.

What to Bring to the Hospital

- ▶ a robe and sturdy slippers
- ▶ comfortable shoes and clothing to wear home
- ▶ toiletries such as a toothbrush and toothpaste
- ▶ a list of medicines you take
- ▶ details of past illnesses, surgeries and allergies
- ▶ your health insurance card
- ▶ names and telephone numbers of people to contact in case of an emergency

What Not to Bring

- ▶ cash over \$10
- ▶ jewelry (including wedding rings, earrings and watches)
- ▶ credit cards and checkbooks