

Preparing for Surgery and Recovery; The Wellness Approach

Following these instructions beginning a few days prior to your surgery, may help speed your recovery, and improve your overall health.

Please speak with your personal physician if you have any questions or concerns about the following.

Communicate with your Care Team

Understand your post-surgery recovery process. Have your medical team explain how you may feel on day 1, day 2, week 1, and week 2 so that you can anticipate what kind of support you will need at home. Know what limitations you may have and the timeline. Talk to other patients who have had a similar procedure and learn about what they needed. Request information on what to bring on the day of surgery, as well as information on discharge plans.

Ask your health care provider about which medications to discontinue and which to continue prior to your surgery.

Line up people to be part of your support team: Talk to them about your needs, your anticipated recovery schedule, and your intentions for recovery.

Prepare your home for your recovery period

If needed, re-arrange furniture and remove throw rugs or other tripping hazards to prevent falls.

Set up resting areas so needed items will be within reach (charging cords, remote controls, phone, place to set drinks and snacks, important numbers, medications).

Stock up on groceries or other items you will need after surgery. Think about the healthy foods that comfort you and have them on hand before surgery. What foods calm your stomach if you are nauseated from anesthesia or pain medications? Know what foods can you have with the medications that you are taking.

Decrease Anxiety

Visit the hospital or surgery center ahead of time so that you can get a sense of what to expect and what you will need to bring with you for your surgery, especially if you will be admitted to the hospital afterwards. Knowing how long it takes to drive to the hospital and where to park can decrease day-of-surgery jitters.

Talk with your doctors and nurses about your dietary needs or any other concerns you may have.

Listen to pre-surgery guided imagery recordings. Guided imagery induces a relaxed state of mind, which enhances your immune system and speeds healing. Repeating positive affirmations about your desired outcome from surgery can also help to set the stage for a successful surgery and recovery. You can listen to these recordings during most surgeries; talk to your surgeon and anesthesiologist about this ahead of time. Guided imagery and affirmation CDs are available

from the Sutter Resource Library located at 2801 K Street, Sacramento, Suite 115; 916-733-9672. Recordings are also available online and as smart phone applications.

Listen to music that you like, to help you relax the day prior to and day of your surgery. Listening to music you love helps your body produce endorphins that help elevate your mood.

Watch funny videos prior to surgery, or engage in laughter exercises. Deep laughter works the diaphragm and helps to clear the lungs; it's also a great way to reduce stress and anxiety before surgery. For some great resources on laughter, check out www.laughteryoga.org.

Practice Restorative Activities

Sleep to the best of your ability: Sleep is restorative, and many healing traditions consider sleep to be the foundation of good health. If you are anxious and have trouble sleeping, try some gentle relaxation or breathing exercises.

Restart your regular exercise routine as soon as allowed after surgery to promote optimal health. **Taking relaxing walks outside** can enhance your respiratory system and improve your mood. Practicing some gentle yoga or stretching exercises can allow your body to ease back into your daily activities after surgery.

Drink plenty of water to improve the function of your liver and kidneys and to help discharge other toxins. Follow your anesthesiologist's instructions on food and liquid consumption the day before surgery.

Seek counseling and support if your surgery involves body image changes, a difficult diagnosis, prolonged recovery, or lifestyle changes.

Stop or Minimize Substances

Avoid all alcohol for at least 2 days prior to and 2 days after surgery.

If you are a smoker, it is important to **stop smoking at least two weeks prior to surgery.** If you need help with this, contact your local American Lung Association office or the California Smoker's HelpLine at 1-800-662-8887.

Stop all vitamins, supplements, and over the counter medicines (unless otherwise instructed by your doctor) two weeks prior to surgery; many of these can interfere with wound healing after surgery.

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For more information on

Sutter Center for Integrative Holistic Health (SCIHH) providers, please visit:
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