

Wellness Suggestions for Recovering from Surgery

Following these instructions can help hasten your recovery and improve your overall health and mood. (Please speak with your personal physician if you have any questions or concerns about the following.)

1. **Talk to the people who are part of your support system** about your needs and your anticipated recovery schedule. Consider sharing these wellness suggestions with appropriate members of your support system.
2. **Drink plenty of water** to flush anesthetics, help discharge other toxins, and improve the functioning of your liver and kidneys.
3. **Drink warm water or herbal tea** to soothe your throat after general anesthesia.
4. **Sleep as much as you can.** Sleep is restorative, and many healing traditions consider sleep to be the foundation of good health.
5. **Breathe deeply** every hour while awake to keep your lungs open and healthy and to promote oxygenation of your tissues.
6. **Eat whole, unprocessed, preferably organic foods**, savored slowly. Emphasize fresh fruits, vegetables, and protein sources. Most people need extra protein in their diet when they are recovering from surgery.
7. **Move your body as soon as possible**, even if it just means wiggling your fingers and toes, or rotating your wrists, ankles and other joints. This helps improve circulation and joint mobility.
8. **Take a walk outside** in fresh air as soon as you are able, if you have not received instructions to the contrary.
9. **Avoid alcohol** during your recovery. Alcohol disrupts the natural rhythm of your sleep cycles and interacts with some medications.
10. **Keep yourself warm.** If you allow yourself to get cold your body has to use some of its energy to warm you so there is less energy available to help you heal.
11. **Take a daily stress formula multi-vitamin / multi-mineral supplement** beginning one or two days after surgery.
12. **Listen to guided imagery CDs.** They induce a relaxed state of mind, which enhances healing. They can also reduce the need for pain

medication. These 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.

13. **Listen to music** that you like. Your body produces endorphins that help elevate your mood when you are listening to music that you love.
14. **Minimize caffeinated drinks** (e.g. coffee, green teas, chocolate) because of the caffeine's stimulating effect.
15. **Cigarette smokers** often find that the absence of cigarettes around the time of surgery can be extended, one day at a time, to break the habit. For additional assistance with smoking cessation, contact 1-800-NOBUTTS.
16. **Check in with yourself about your level of recovery** as your needs and circumstances change.
17. **Don't be surprised if your short-term memory isn't up to speed for a week or more** after surgery. Anesthesia and pain medications can cause short-term memory loss and take time to wear off.

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