# About Your Liver Surgery

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About Your Surgery

This guide will help you prepare for your liver surgery at Memorial Sloan Kettering (MSK). It will also help you understand what to expect during your recovery. Read through this guide at least once before your surgery and use it as a reference in the days leading up to your surgery. Bring this guide with you every time you come to MSK, including the day of your surgery. You and your healthcare team will refer to it throughout your care.

About the Liver

Your liver is a large organ located on the right side of your body, just under your ribs. It’s shaded in Figure 1, below. Your liver has many functions, including:

- Storing and filtering blood.
- Making bile, which helps with the breakdown of food (digestion), especially of protein and fat.
- Changing sugar into a form your body can use for energy.
- Helping your body get rid of waste products.
- Making the substances that your blood needs to clot.

The healthy part of your liver that is left after surgery will grow larger to replace the part that was removed. It should return to its original size within a few weeks. However, it will take longer for your liver to be fully functional.

Liver Surgery

There are several kinds of liver surgeries to treat cancer. One is a liver resection, in which the part of the liver with the tumors is removed. Another is a liver ablation, which kills cancer cells by exposing them to very high temperatures or electric currents.

Your doctor will explain which type of surgery you will have. Some people may have a combination of both a liver resection and a liver ablation.

Your surgeon will make an incision (surgical cut) to see your liver clearly. They will decide the size of the incision and if a minimally invasive technique, (which makes very small incisions and uses cameras for guidance) is appropriate for you. Then, your surgeon will look at your liver using an ultrasound to confirm the location and number of tumors in it.

If your surgeon is removing a tumor, they will also need to take out a small amount of healthy tissue around it. The amount of tissue that will be removed depends on the size and location of the tumor(s).

Your surgeon may decide that the best way to treat your tumor(s) is to ablate it. There are different methods used for liver ablation. Radio frequency ablation (RFA) and microwave ablation kill cancer cells by heating them. Irreversible electroporation is a new method of ablation which uses an electric current to kill cancer cells.
Liver ablation methods can be used individually, in combination with a liver resection, or in combination with one another. The exact treatment differs from person to person.

The length of your surgery will depend on how many tumors need to be treated. Most surgeries take between 2 and 4 hours but others may be longer. Your surgeon may close your incision with staples, sutures (stitches), or glue.
The information in this section will help you prepare for your surgery. Read through this section when your surgery is scheduled and refer to it as your surgery date gets closer. It contains important information about what you need to do before your surgery. Write down any questions you have and be sure to ask your doctor or nurse.
Preparing for Your Surgery

You and your healthcare team will work together to prepare for your surgery.

About Drinking Alcohol

The amount of alcohol you drink can affect you during and after your surgery. It’s important that you talk with us about your alcohol intake so that we can plan your care.

- Stopping alcohol suddenly can cause seizures, delirium, and death. If we know you are at risk for these complications, we can prescribe medication to help prevent them.

- If you drink alcohol regularly, you may be at risk for other complications during and after surgery. These include bleeding, infections, heart problems, and a longer hospital stay.

Here are things you can do to prevent problems before your surgery:

- Be honest with your healthcare provider about how much alcohol you drink.
- Try to stop drinking alcohol once your surgery is planned. If you develop a headache, nausea, increased anxiety, or cannot sleep after you stop drinking, tell your doctor right away. These are early signs of alcohol withdrawal and can be treated.
- Tell your healthcare provider if you cannot stop drinking.
- Ask us any questions you have about drinking and surgery. As always, all of your medical information will be kept confidential.

About Smoking

People who smoke can have breathing problems when they have surgery. Stopping even for a few days before surgery can help. If you smoke, your nurse will refer to you our Tobacco Treatment Program. You can also reach the program at 212-610-0507.
About Sleep Apnea

Sleep apnea is a common breathing disorder that causes a person to stop breathing for short periods of time while sleeping. The most common type is obstructive sleep apnea (OSA). With OSA, the airway becomes completely blocked during sleep. It can cause serious problems during and after surgery.

Please tell us if you have sleep apnea or if you think you might have it. If you use a breathing machine (such as a CPAP) for sleep apnea, bring it with you the day of your surgery.

Within 30 Days of Your Surgery

Presurgical Testing (PST)

Before your surgery, you will have an appointment for presurgical testing (PST). The date, time, and location of your PST appointment will be printed on the appointment reminder from your surgeon’s office. You can eat and take your usual medications the day of your PST appointment.

During your appointment, you will meet with a nurse practitioner who works closely with anesthesiology staff (doctors and specialized nurses who will give you medication to put you to sleep during your surgery). Your nurse practitioner will review your medical and surgical history with you. You will have tests, including an electrocardiogram (EKG) to check your heart rhythm, a chest x-ray, blood tests, and any other tests necessary to plan your care. Your nurse practitioner may also recommend you see other healthcare providers.

Your nurse practitioner will talk with you about which medications you should take the morning of your surgery.

It is very helpful if you bring the following with you to your PST appointment:

- A list of all the medications you are taking, including patches and creams.
- Results of any tests done outside of MSK, such as a cardiac stress test, echocardiogram, or carotid doppler study.
- The name(s) and telephone number(s) of your doctor(s).

Complete a Health Care Proxy Form

If you haven’t already completed a Health Care Proxy form, we recommend you complete one now. A health care proxy is a legal document that identifies the person who will speak for you if you are unable to communicate for yourself. The person you identify is called your health care agent.

If you are interested in completing a Health Care Proxy form, talk with your nurse. If you have completed one already, or if you have any other advance directive, bring it with you to your next appointment.
**Do Breathing and Coughing Exercises**

Practice taking deep breaths and coughing before your surgery. You will be given an incentive spirometer to help expand your lungs. For more information, read *How to Use Your Incentive Spirometer*, located in the “After Your Surgery” section of this guide. If you have any questions, ask your nurse or respiratory therapist.

**Exercise**

Try to do aerobic exercise every day, such as walking at least 1 mile, swimming, or biking. If it’s cold outside, use stairs in your home or go to a mall or shopping market. Exercising will help your body get into its best condition for your surgery and make your recovery faster and easier.

**Eat a Healthy Diet**

Eat a well-balanced, healthy diet before your surgery. If you need help with your diet talk with your doctor or nurse about meeting with a dietitian.

**10 Days Before Your Surgery**

**Stop Taking Certain Medications**

If you take vitamin E, stop taking it 10 days before your surgery. If you take aspirin, ask your surgeon whether you should continue. Aspirin, medications that contain aspirin, and vitamin E can cause bleeding. If your cardiologist feels you need to remain on aspirin, liver surgery can be performed safely while you continue to take this medication. For more information, read *Common Medications Containing Aspirin and Other Nonsteroidal Anti-inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs)*, located in this section.

**Purchase Hibiclens® Skin Cleanser and Clear Liquids**

Hibiclens is a skin cleanser that kills germs for 24 hours after using it (see Figure 2). Showering with Hibiclens before surgery will help lower your risk of infection after surgery. You can buy Hibiclens at your local pharmacy without a prescription.

Purchase clear liquids to drink the day before your surgery. For a list of clear liquids that you can drink, see the table in this section.

Figure 2. Hibiclens skin cleanser
Purchase Supplies for Bowel Preparation, If Needed

If you need to do a bowel preparation before your surgery, your nurse will tell you how. Use the area below to check off and write in any supplies you’ll need.

**Magnesium citrate bowel preparation**

- □ 1 (10-ounce) bottle of magnesium citrate

**MiraLAX® bowel preparation**

- □ 1 (5 mg) tablet of bisacodyl (Dulcolax®). These are usually sold as a box of 10 tablets.
- □ 1 (238 gram) bottle of polyethylene glycol (MiraLAX)
- □ 1 (64-ounce) bottle of a clear liquid
- □ ____________________________________________________________________________
- □ ____________________________________________________________________________

Days Before Your Surgery

**Stop Taking Certain Medications**

Stop taking nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) such as ibuprofen (e.g., Advil®, Motrin®) or naproxen (e.g., Aleve®). These medications can cause bleeding. For more information, read *Common Medications Containing Aspirin and Other Nonsteroidal Anti-inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs)*, located in this section.

**Stop Taking Herbal Remedies and Supplements**

Stop taking herbal remedies or supplements 7 days before your surgery. If you take a multivitamin, talk with your doctor or nurse about whether you should continue. For more information, read *Herbal Remedies and Cancer Treatment*, located in this section.

**Watch a Virtual Tour**

This video will give you an idea of what to expect when you come to Memorial Sloan Kettering’s main hospital on the day of your surgery.

[www.mskcc.org/pe/day-your-surgery](http://www.mskcc.org/pe/day-your-surgery)
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Day Before Your Surgery

Note the Time of Your Surgery

A clerk from the Admitting Office will call you after 2:00 PM the day before your surgery. The clerk will tell you what time you should arrive at the hospital for your surgery. If you are scheduled for surgery on a Monday, you will be called on the Friday before. If you do not receive a call by 7:00 PM, call 212-639-5014.

Use this area to write in information when the clerk calls:

Date______________    Time______________

☐ Presurgical Center (PSC) on the 6th floor
  1275 York Avenue (between East 67th and East 68th Streets) New York, NY
  B elevator to 6th floor

Drink Only Clear Liquids

You will need to follow a clear liquid diet the day before your surgery. A clear liquid diet includes only liquids you can see through. Examples are listed in the table below.

While you are on this diet:

• Do not eat any solid foods.

• Make sure to drink plenty of liquids other than water, coffee, and tea. Try to drink at least 1 (8-ounce) glass of clear liquid every hour while you're awake.

Clear Liquid Diet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drink</th>
<th>Do Not Drink</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Soups</td>
<td>Clear broth, bouillon, or consommé</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Any products with any particles of dried food or seasoning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweets</td>
<td>• Gelatin, such as Jell-O®</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Flavored ices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Hard candies, such as Lifesavers®</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drink</td>
<td>All others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drinks</td>
<td>• Clear fruit juices, such as apple, cranberry, lemonade, or grape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Soda, such as 7-Up®, Sprite®, ginger ale, seltzer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Gatorade®</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Black coffee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Tea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Juices with pulp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Nectars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Milk or cream</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Alcoholic beverages</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Start Bowel Preparation, If Needed

If your surgeon or nurse told you that you will need to do a bowel preparation, you will need to start it 1 day before your surgery.

During both the magnesium citrate and MiraLAX bowel preparations:

• Do not eat any solid foods.

• Make sure to drink plenty of liquids other than water, decaffeinated black coffee, and decaffeinated tea. Try to drink at least 1 (8-ounce) glass every hour while you’re awake.

□ Magnesium citrate bowel preparation

• At 2:00 pm on the day before your surgery, drink the magnesium citrate.

□ MiraLAX bowel preparation

• On the morning before your surgery, mix all 238 grams of MiraLAX with the 64 ounces of clear liquid until the MiraLAX powder dissolves. Once the MiraLAX is dissolved, you can put the mixture in the refrigerator, if you prefer.

The MiraLAX bowel preparation will cause frequent bowel movements, so be sure to be near a bathroom the evening before your surgery.

At 3:00 pm on the day before your surgery, take 1 bisacodyl tablet by mouth with a glass of water.

At 5:00 pm on the day before your surgery, start drinking the MiraLAX bowel preparation. Drink 1 (8-ounce) glass of the mixture every 15 minutes until the container is empty. When you’re finished drinking the MiraLAX, drink 4 to 6 glasses of clear liquids. You can continue to drink clear liquids until midnight, but it is not required.

Apply zinc oxide ointment or Desitin® to the skin around your anus after every bowel movement. This helps prevent irritation.

Shower with Hibiclens

The night before your surgery, shower using Hibiclens. To use Hibiclens, open the bottle and pour some solution into your hand or a washcloth. Move away from the shower stream to avoid rinsing off the Hibiclens too soon. Rub it gently over your body from your neck to your waist and rinse.

Don’t let the solution get into your eyes, ears, mouth, or genital area. Don’t use any other soap. Dry yourself off with a clean towel after your shower.

Sleep

Go to bed early and get a full night’s sleep.
The Morning of Your Surgery

Shower with Hibiclens

Shower using Hibiclens just before you leave for the hospital. Use the Hibiclens the same way you did the night before. Don’t use any other soap. Don’t put on any lotion, cream, powder, deodorant, makeup, or perfume after your shower.

Take Your Medications as Instructed

If your doctor or nurse practitioner instructed you to take certain medications the morning of your surgery, take only those medications with a sip of water. Depending on what medications you take and the surgery you’re having, this may be all, some, or none of your usual morning medications.

Things to Remember

- Don’t put on any lotion, cream, deodorant, makeup, powder, or perfume.
- Don’t wear any metal objects. Remove all jewelry, including body piercings. The equipment used during your surgery can cause burns if it touches metal.
- Leave valuables, such as credit cards, jewelry, or your checkbook at home.
- Before you’re taken into the operating room, you will need to remove your hearing aids, dentures, prosthetic device(s), wig, and religious articles, such as a rosary.
- Wear something comfortable and loose-fitting.
- If you wear contact lenses, wear your glasses instead.
-__________________________________________________________________________________________
-__________________________________________________________________________________________
-__________________________________________________________________________________________
-__________________________________________________________________________________________
What to Bring

- Your breathing machine for sleep apnea (such as your CPAP), if you have one.
- Your portable music player, if you choose. However, someone will need to hold this item for you when you go into surgery.
- Your incentive spirometer, if you have one.
- Your Health Care Proxy Form, if you have completed one.
- Your cell phone and charger.
- A case for your personal items, such as eyeglasses, hearing aid(s), dentures, prosthetic device(s), wig, and religious articles, if you have it.
- This guide. Your healthcare team will use this guide to teach you how to care for yourself after your surgery.

Parking When You Arrive

MSK's parking garage is located on East 66th Street between York and First Avenues. If you have questions about prices, call 212- 639-2338.

To reach the garage, turn onto East 66th Street from York Avenue. The garage is located about a quarter of a block in from York Avenue, on the right-hand (north) side of the street. There is a pedestrian tunnel that you can walk through that connects the garage to the hospital.

There are also other garages located on East 69th Street between First and Second Avenues, East 67th Street between York and First Avenues, and East 65th Street between First and Second Avenues.
Once You’re in the Hospital

You will be asked to state and spell your name and date of birth many times. This is for your safety. People with the same or similar names may be having surgery on the same day.

Get Dressed for Surgery

When it is time to change for surgery, you will get a hospital gown, robe, and nonskid socks to wear.

Meet With Your Nurse

You will meet with your nurse before surgery. Tell your nurse the dose of any medications (including patches and creams) you took after midnight and the time you took them.

Meet With Your Anesthesiologist

Your anesthesiologist will:

- Review your medical history with you.
- Talk with you about your comfort and safety during your surgery.
- Talk with you about the kind of anesthesia (medication to make you sleep) you will receive.
- Answer any questions you may have about your anesthesia.

Prepare for Your Surgery

Once your nurse has seen you, 1 or 2 visitors can keep you company as you wait for your surgery to begin. When it is time for your surgery, your visitor(s) will be shown to the waiting area. Your visitors should read Information for Family and Friends for the Day of Surgery, located in this section.

You will either walk into the operating room or be taken in on a stretcher. A member of the operating room team will help you onto the operating bed. Compression boots will be placed on your lower legs. These gently inflate and deflate to help circulation in your legs.

Your anesthesiologist will place an intravenous (IV) line into a vein, usually in your arm or hand. The IV line will be used to give you fluids and anesthesia (medication to make you sleep) during your surgery.

Your anesthesiologist may also put an epidural catheter (thin, flexible tube) in your spine (back). This will be used to give you pain medication. The medication is delivered into your epidural space, which is the area just outside your spinal cord. It will give you pain relief with fewer side effects, such as nausea, vomiting, and sleepiness. This is similar to what is given to women when they have babies.

Once you are fully asleep, a breathing tube will be placed through your mouth and into your windpipe to help you breathe. You will also have a urinary catheter placed to drain urine from your bladder.

Once your surgery is finished, your incision will be closed with staples or with sutures. Steri-Strips™ (thin pieces of tape) will be placed directly on your incision and covered with a bandage. Your breathing tube is usually taken out while you are still in the operating room.
Common Medications Containing Aspirin and Other Nonsteroidal Anti-inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs)

This information will help you identify medications that contain aspirin and other nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs). It’s important to stop these medications before many cancer treatments.

Aspirin, other NSAIDs (such as ibuprofen), and vitamin E can increase your risk of bleeding during cancer treatment. These medications affect your platelets, which are blood cells that clot to prevent bleeding.

Read the section “Examples of Medications” to see if your medications contain aspirin, other NSAIDs, or vitamin E.

If you take aspirin, medications that contain aspirin, other NSAIDs, or vitamin E, tell your doctor or nurse. They will tell you if you need to stop taking these medications before your treatment. You will also find instructions in the information about the treatment you’re having.

Before Your Surgery

If you’re having surgery, follow the instructions below.

- Stop taking medications that contain vitamin E 10 days before your surgery or as directed by your doctor.
- Stop taking medications that contain aspirin 7 days before your surgery or as directed by your doctor. If you take aspirin because you’ve had a problem with your heart or you’ve had a stroke, be sure to talk with your doctor.
before you stop taking it.

- Stop taking NSAIDs 48 hours before your surgery or as directed by your doctor.

**Before Your Radiology Procedure**

If you’re having a radiology procedure (including Interventional Radiology, Interventional Mammography, and General Radiology), follow the instructions below.

- Stop taking medications that contain vitamin E 10 days before your procedure, or as directed by your doctor.
- If your doctor tells you to stop taking aspirin, stop taking it 5 days before your procedure or as directed by your doctor. If you take aspirin because you’ve had a problem with your heart or you’ve had a stroke, be sure talk with your doctor before you stop taking it.
  - If you take low dose aspirin (81 mg), you may not need to stop it before your procedure. Your doctor will tell you if you should stop taking low dose aspirin.
- Stop taking NSAIDs 24 hours before your procedure or as directed by your doctor.

**Before and During Your Chemotherapy**

Chemotherapy can decrease your platelet count, which can increase your risk of bleeding. Whether you’re just starting chemotherapy or you’ve been receiving it, talk with your doctor or nurse before taking aspirin or NSAIDs.

**Examples of Medications**

Medications are often called by their brand name, which can make it hard to know their ingredients. To help you identify medications that contain aspirin, other NSAIDs, and vitamin E, please review the lists below.

These lists include the most common products, but there are others. Check with your healthcare provider if you aren’t sure. Always be sure your doctor knows all
the medications you’re taking, both prescription and over-the-counter.

## Common medications that contain aspirin

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aggrenox®</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bayer® (most formulations)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equagesic Tablets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isollyl®</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panosal®</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synalgos®-DC Capsules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alka Seltzer®</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BC® Powder and Cold Formulations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equazine®</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lanorinal®</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percodan® Tablets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenol-Plus®</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anacin®</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bufferin® (most formulations)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excedrin® Migraine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lortab® ASA Tablets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persitin®</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trigesic®</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arthritis Pain Formula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buffets II®</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excedrin® Migraine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magnaprin®</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robaxisal Tablets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talwin® Compound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arthritis Foundation Pain Reliever®</td>
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<tr>
<td>Buffex®</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fiorgen®</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marnal®</td>
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<tr>
<td>Roxiprin®</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vanquish® Analgesic Caplets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASA Enseals®</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cama® Arthritis Pain Reliever (most formulations)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fiorinal® (most formulations)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Micrainin®</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saleto®</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wesprin® Buffered</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASA Suppositories®</td>
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<tr>
<td>COPE®</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fiortal®</td>
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<tr>
<td>Momentum®</td>
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<tr>
<td>Salocol®</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zee-Seltzer®</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ascriptin® and Ascriptin A/D®</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dasin®</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gelpirin®</td>
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<tr>
<td>Norgesic Forte® (most formulations)</td>
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<td>Sodol®</td>
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<tr>
<td>ZORprin®</td>
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<td>Aspergum®</td>
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<td>Easprin®</td>
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<tr>
<td>Genprin®</td>
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<tr>
<td>Norwich® Aspirin</td>
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<tr>
<td>Soma® Compound Tablets</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asprimox®</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ecotrin® (most formulations)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gensan®</td>
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<tr>
<td>PAC® Analgesic Tablets</td>
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<tr>
<td>Soma® Compound with Codeine Tablets</td>
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<tr>
<td>Axotal®</td>
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<tr>
<td>Empirin® Aspirin (most formulations)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heartline®</td>
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<tr>
<td>Orphengesic®</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Joseph® Adult</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Common medications that are NSAIDs that don’t contain aspirin

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advil®</th>
<th>Celecoxib</th>
<th>Flurbiprofen</th>
<th>Meclofenamate</th>
<th>Nalfon®</th>
<th>Ponstel®</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advil Migraine®</td>
<td>Children’s Motrin®</td>
<td>Genpril®</td>
<td>Mefenamic Acid</td>
<td>Naproxen</td>
<td>Relafem®</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aleve®</td>
<td>Clinoril®</td>
<td>Ibuprofen</td>
<td>Meloxicam</td>
<td>Naprosyn®</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anaprox DS®</td>
<td>Daypro®</td>
<td>Indomethacin</td>
<td>Menadon®</td>
<td>Nuprin®</td>
<td>Saleto 200®</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ansaid®</td>
<td>Diclofenac</td>
<td>Indocin®</td>
<td>Midol®</td>
<td>Orudis®</td>
<td>Sulindac</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arthrotec®</td>
<td>Etodolac®</td>
<td>Ketoprofen</td>
<td>Mobic®</td>
<td>Oxaprozin</td>
<td>Toradol®</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bayer Select Pain Relief Formula Caplets</td>
<td>Feldene®</td>
<td>Ketorolac</td>
<td>Motrin®</td>
<td>PediaCare Fever®</td>
<td>Voltaren®</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celebrex®</td>
<td>Fenoprofen</td>
<td>Lodine®</td>
<td>Nabumetone</td>
<td>Piroxicam</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Products with Vitamin E

Most multivitamins contain vitamin E. If you take a multivitamin be sure to check the label. The following products contain vitamin E:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amino-Opt-E</th>
<th>Aquavit</th>
<th>E-400 IU</th>
<th>E complex-600</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aquasol E</td>
<td>D’alpha E</td>
<td>E-1000 IU Softgels</td>
<td>Vita-Plus E</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

About Acetaminophen

Acetaminophen (Tylenol®) is generally safe to take during your cancer treatment. It doesn’t affect platelets, so it won’t increase your chance of bleeding. However, talk with your doctor before taking acetaminophen if you’re getting chemotherapy.
The following common medications contain acetaminophen.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acpehen®</th>
<th>Datril®</th>
<th>Lortab®</th>
<th>Roxicet®</th>
<th>Vicodin®</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aceta® with Codeine</td>
<td>Di-Gesic®</td>
<td>Naldegesic®</td>
<td>Talacen®</td>
<td>Wygesic®</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acetaminophen with Codeine</td>
<td>Esgic®</td>
<td>Norco®</td>
<td>Tempra®</td>
<td>Zydone®</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aspirin-Free Anacin®</td>
<td>Excedrin P.M.®</td>
<td>Panadol®</td>
<td>Tylenol®</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arthritis Pain Formula® Aspirin-Free</td>
<td>Fiorcet®</td>
<td>Percocet®</td>
<td>Tylenol® with Codeine No. 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darvocet-N 100®</td>
<td>Lorcel®</td>
<td>Repan</td>
<td>Vanquish®</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Read the labels on all your medications

Acetaminophen is safe when used as directed, but there is a limit to how much you can take in 1 day. It’s possible to take too much acetaminophen without knowing because it’s in many different medications.

Make sure to always read and follow the label on the product you are taking. Acetaminophen is a very common ingredient found in over-the-counter and prescription medications. It’s often an ingredient in pain relievers, fever reducers, sleep aids, and cough, cold, and allergy medications.

The full name acetaminophen isn’t always written out, so look for these common abbreviations, especially on prescription pain relievers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>APAP</th>
<th>AC</th>
<th>Acetaminop</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acetamin</td>
<td>Acetam</td>
<td>Acetaminoph</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Do not take more than 1 medication that contains acetaminophen at a time without talking with a member of your healthcare team.
Herbal Remedies and Cancer Treatment

This information explains herbal remedies and how they can affect your cancer treatment.

One week before you have surgery or start chemotherapy or radiation therapy, you must stop taking any herbal or botanical home remedies or other dietary supplements. This is because they can:

- Interact with your other medications.
- Increase or lower your blood pressure.
- Thin your blood and increase your risk of bleeding.
- Make radiation therapy less effective.
- Increase the effects of sedation or anesthesia (medications to make you sleepy).

You can continue to use herbs in your food and drinks, such as spices in cooking, but you must stop taking them in supplemental form before your treatment. Herbal supplements are stronger than the herbs you would use in cooking.

Common Herbal Supplements and Their Effects

These are some commonly used herbs and their side effects on cancer treatments.

**Echinacea**

- Can cause an allergic reaction, such as a rash or difficulty breathing.
- Can lower the effects of medications used to weaken the immune system.
Garlic

- Can lower your blood pressure, fat, and cholesterol levels.
- Can increase your risk of bleeding.

Gingko (also known as *Gingko biloba*)

- Can increase your risk of bleeding.

Ginseng

- Can lower the effects of sedation or anesthesia.
- Can increase your risk of bleeding.
- Can lower your blood glucose (sugar) level.

Turmeric

- Can make chemotherapy less effective.

St. John’s Wort

- Can interact with medications given during surgery.
- Can make your skin more sensitive to radiation or laser treatment.

Valerian

- Can increase the effects of anesthesia or sedation.

Herbal formulas

- Herbal formulas contain different herbs. We don’t know their side effects. You must also stop taking these products 1 week before treatment. Do not start taking herbal formulas again until your doctor tells you it’s safe.

This information does not cover all herbal remedies or possible side effects. Speak with your healthcare provider if you have any questions or concerns.

For more information about herbs and botanicals, visit the Memorial Sloan Kettering (MSK) Integrative Medicine Service website at www.aboutherbs.com.
Information for Family and Friends for the Day of Surgery

This information explains what to expect on the day your friend or family member is having surgery at Memorial Sloan Kettering’s (MSK) main hospital.

Before the Surgery

After arriving at the hospital, the patient will be asked to provide contact information for the person who will be meeting with the surgeon after the surgery. This is the same person who will get updates from the nurse liaison during the surgery. If the patient is having an outpatient procedure, they will also be asked to provide contact information for the person who will be taking them home.

Once the patient is checked in, they will go to the Presurgical Center (PSC) to be examined before surgery. Sometimes, they may need to wait before they are admitted to the PSC.

In the PSC, the nurse will do an exam. One person can come along to the PSC, but other visitors should wait in the waiting area. If the patient wants, other visitors may join them when the nurse has finished the exam.

When the operating room (OR) is ready, a member of the surgical team will come to escort the patient into the OR. They will prepare the patient for surgery, which can take 15 to 90 minutes. Then, the surgery will begin.

Please remember the following:

- **Do not bring food or drinks to the waiting area.** Patients are not allowed to eat or drink before their surgery or procedure.
- Our patients are at high risk for infection. Please do not visit if you have any cold or flu symptoms (fever, sneezing, sniffles, or a cough). We may ask you...
to wear a mask if there are any concerns about your health.

- If the patient brought any valuables, such as a cell phone, iPod, or iPad, please keep them safe for them during surgery.
- Sometimes, surgeries may be delayed. We make every effort to tell you when this happens.

**During the Surgery**

After the patient is taken to the OR, please wait in the main lobby on the 1st floor, where you will be updated by the nurse liaison. While you’re waiting, here are some things you can do:

- Food and drinks are available in the cafeteria and gift shop. You can also bring your own food and eat it in the cafeteria.
- The coat-check room is located at the bottom of the escalator on the ground level. It’s open Monday through Friday from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm.
- Wireless Internet access is available in most areas of the hospital. The wifi network name is MSK_guest. You can also use the computers in the room off the main lobby.
- Please be courteous and mindful of others while using your cell phone. Use the designated area to accept and make calls on your cell phone. It may be useful to bring your phone charger to the hospital.
- The Mary French Rockefeller All Faith Chapel is an interfaith chapel located in room M106 near the main lobby on the 1st floor. It’s open at all times for meditation and prayer.
- The Patient Recreation Pavilion is open daily from 9:00 am to 8:00 pm for patients and their visitors. Children are allowed in the pavilion as long as they are supervised by an adult. The pavilion has arts and crafts, a library, an outdoor terrace, and scheduled entertainment events. To get to the pavilion, take the M elevators to the 15th floor.

**Surgery updates**

A nurse liaison will keep you updated on the progress of surgery. They will:

- Give you information about the patient.
• Prepare you for your meeting with the surgeon.
• Arrange for you to visit the patient in the Post Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU).

To contact the nurse liaison:

• From inside the hospital, use a hospital courtesy phone. Dial 2000 and ask for beeper 9000. Please be patient, as this can take up to 2 minutes.
• Ask the information desk staff to contact the nurse liaison for you.

After the Surgery

Meeting with the surgeon
When the patient’s surgery is completed, we will call you and ask you to return to the concierge desk to tell you where to go to meet with the surgeon.

After you have met with the surgeon, return to the concierge desk and tell them that you have finished your consultation.

Visiting the patient in the PACU
After surgery, the patient will be taken to the PACU. It can take up to 90 minutes before the patient is ready to have visitors. You can use this time to take a walk or just relax in the waiting area until the patient is ready to see you.

When the patient is able to have visitors, a staff member will take you to the PACU for one brief visit. No one is allowed to stay overnight with the patient in the PACU, except for caregivers of pediatric patients.

Please follow these guidelines before your visit:

• Silence your cell phone.
• Apply an alcohol-based hand sanitizer (such as Purell®) before entering. There are hand sanitizer stations located throughout the hospital.
• Do not bring food or flowers into the PACU.

Please remember that only a limited number of visitors can go into the PACU. This is to keep the area quiet and allow the patients to rest and receive care.
While visiting in the PACU

- Speak quietly.
- Respect other patients’ privacy by staying at the bedside of your friend or family member.
- If any PACU patient needs special nursing attention, we may ask you to leave or to delay your visit.

The nurse will update you with the plan of care for the patient, such as whether the patient is staying overnight and when they will be moved to an inpatient room. If the patient is staying overnight, you may visit them again in the PACU. If the patient is going home the same day, a caregiver must take them home.

After your visit, a staff member will escort you back from the PACU.

We will give you a card with the PACU phone number. Please choose one person to call for updates.
The information in this section will tell you what to expect after your surgery, both during your hospital stay and after you leave the hospital. You will learn how to safely recover from your surgery. Write down any questions you have and be sure to ask your doctor or nurse.
What to Expect

When you wake up after your surgery, you will be in the Post Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU).

You will receive oxygen through a thin tube that rests below your nose called a nasal cannula. A nurse will be monitoring your body temperature, pulse, blood pressure, and oxygen levels.

You may have a urinary catheter (Foley®) in your bladder to monitor the amount of urine you are making. You will also have compression boots on your lower legs to help your circulation.

You may have a pain pump called a patient-controlled analgesia (PCA) device. For more information, read Patient-Controlled Analgesia (PCA), located in this section. If you do not have an epidural catheter, your pain medication will be given through an IV line.

Your visitors can see you briefly in the PACU, usually within 90 minutes after you arrive there. A member of the nursing staff will explain the guidelines to them.

Depending on the type of surgery you had, you may stay in the PACU overnight. After your stay in the PACU, you will be taken to your hospital room. Soon after you arrive in your room, you will be helped out of bed and into a chair.

Your nurse will tell you how to recover from your surgery. Below are examples of ways you can help yourself recover safely.

- You will be encouraged to walk with the help of your nurse or physical therapist. We will give you medication to relieve pain. Walking helps reduce the risk for blood clots and pneumonia. It also helps to stimulate your bowels so they begin working again.

- Use your incentive spirometer. This will help your lungs expand, which prevents pneumonia. For more information, read How to Use Your Incentive Spirometer, located in this section. Your nurse will teach you to splint your incision. This will reduce the movement of your stomach muscles and decrease pain while you do the coughing exercises.
Commonly Asked Questions: During Your Hospital Stay

**Will I have pain after my surgery?**
Yes, you will have pain after your surgery, especially in the first few days. Your doctor and nurse will ask you about your pain often and give you medication as needed. If your pain is not relieved, tell your doctor or nurse. You will be given a prescription for pain medication before you leave the hospital.

Pain medication may cause constipation (having fewer bowel movements than what is normal for you).

**Why is it important to walk?**
Walking will help prevent blood clots in your legs. It also decreases your risk of having other complications such as pneumonia.

**Will I be able to eat?**
You will not be allowed to eat for the first day or 2 following the surgery. Then you will be on a clear liquid diet. After that, your diet will progress to a regular diet as tolerated.

Eating a balanced diet high in protein will help you heal after surgery. Your diet should include a healthy protein source at each meal, as well as fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. For more tips on increasing the amount of calories and protein in your diet, ask your nurse for the resource *Eating Well During and After Your Cancer Treatment*. If you have questions about your diet, ask to see a dietitian.

**How long will I be in the hospital?**
Most people are in the hospital for 5 to 7 days after having a liver resection or ablation but this will depend on the exact surgery that is done.
Commonly Asked Questions: After You Leave the Hospital

Will I have pain when I am home?
The length of time each person has pain or discomfort varies. You may still have some pain when you go home and will probably be taking pain medication. Follow the guidelines below.

- Take your medications as directed and as needed.
- Call your doctor if the medication prescribed for you doesn’t relieve your pain.
- Do not drive or drink alcohol while you are taking prescription pain medication.
- As your incision heals, you will have less pain and need less pain medication. A mild pain reliever such as acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil) will relieve aches and discomfort. However, large quantities of acetaminophen may be harmful to your liver. Do not take more acetaminophen than the amount directed on the bottle or as instructed by your doctor or nurse.
- Pain medication should help you as you resume your normal activities. Take enough medication to do your exercises comfortably. Pain medication is most effective 30 to 45 minutes after taking it.
- Keep track of when you take your pain medication. Taking it when your pain first begins is more effective than waiting for the pain to get worse.

How can I prevent constipation?

- Go to the bathroom at the same time every day. Your body will get used to going at that time.
- If you feel the urge to go, do not put it off. Try to use the bathroom 5 to 15 minutes after meals.
- After breakfast is a good time to move your bowels. The reflexes in your colon are strongest at this time.
- Exercise, if you can. Walking is an excellent form of exercise.
- Drink 8 (8-ounce) glasses (2 liters) of liquids daily, if you can. Drink water, juices, soups, ice cream shakes, and other drinks that don’t have caffeine. Drinks with caffeine, such as coffee and soda, pull fluid out of the body.
- Slowly increase the fiber in your diet to 25 to 35 grams per day. Fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and cereals contain fiber. If you have an ostomy or have had recent bowel surgery, check with your doctor or nurse before making any changes in your diet.
- Both over-the-counter and prescription medications are available to treat constipation. Start with 1 of the following over-the-counter medications first:
  - Docusate sodium (Colace®) 100 mg. Take _____ capsules _____ times a day. This is a stool softener that causes few side effects. Do not take it with mineral oil.
  - Polyethylene glycol (MiraLAX®) 17 grams daily.
  - Senna (Senokot®) 2 tablets at bedtime. This is a stimulant laxative, which can cause cramping.
- If you haven’t had a bowel movement in 2 days, call your doctor or nurse.
Can I shower?
Yes. Taking a warm shower is relaxing and can help decrease muscle aches. Use soap when you shower and gently wash your incision. Pat the areas dry with a towel after showering, and leave your incision uncovered (unless there is drainage). Call your doctor if you see any redness or drainage from your incision.

Do not take tub baths until you discuss it with your doctor at the first appointment after your surgery.

Is it normal not to feel hungry after surgery?
It is common to have a decreased appetite after surgery. Try eating several smaller meals that have each of the food groups (i.e., fruits/vegetables, meat/chicken/fish, breads/grains, dairy products). This will help you heal faster.

In addition to not being hungry, you may also not be able to taste things the way you did before your surgery. This will improve with time.

Can I drink alcohol after surgery?
Alcohol is cleared out of the body through the liver. Do not drink alcohol until you check with your doctor or nurse.

How do I care for my incision?
The location of your incision will depend on the type of surgery you had. It is normal to have numbness of the skin below the incision because some of the nerves were cut; this sensation will lessen over time.

• By the time you are ready to leave the hospital, your surgical incision will have begun to heal.

• You and your caregiver should look at your incision with your nurse before you leave the hospital so you know what it looks like.

• If any liquid is draining from your incision, you should write down the amount and color. Call your doctor’s office and speak with the nurse about any drainage from your incision.

Change your bandages at least once a day and more often if they become wet with drainage. When there is no longer any drainage coming from your incision, they can be left uncovered.

If you go home with Steri-Strips™ on your incision, they will loosen and fall off by themselves. If they haven’t fallen off within 10 days, you may remove them.

Is it normal to feel tired after surgery?
Feeling tired (fatigue) is the most common complaint after liver resection or ablation. It is an expected side effect. You may need a nap during the day, but try to stay out of bed as much as possible. That will help you sleep at night. It usually takes 6 to 8 weeks until your energy level returns to normal.
When can I resume my activities?

It is important for you to resume your activities after surgery. Spread them out over the course of the day. You can do light household tasks. Try washing dishes, preparing light meals, and other activities as you are able.

You may experience swelling in both of your lower legs following surgery. This will get better with time. If you feel that the swelling is getting worse while you are home and is interfering with your activities please call your doctor and let him or her know.

You may return to your usual sexual activity as soon as your incision is healed and you can do so without pain or fatigue.

Your body is an excellent guide for telling you when you have done too much. When you increase your activity, monitor your body's reaction. You may find that you have more energy in the morning or the afternoon. Plan your activities for times of the day when you have more energy.

When is it safe for me to drive?

You may resume driving 3 weeks after surgery as long as you are not taking pain medication that may make you drowsy.

When can I return to work?

The time it takes to return to work depends on the type of work you do, the type of surgery you had, and how fast your body heals.

What exercises can I do?

Exercise will help you gain strength and feel better. Walking and stair climbing are excellent forms of exercise. Gradually increase the distance you walk. Climb stairs slowly, resting or stopping as needed. Ask your doctor or nurse before starting more strenuous exercises.

When can I lift heavy objects?

Check with your doctor before you do any heavy lifting. Normally, you shouldn't lift anything heavier than 5 pounds (2.27 kilograms) for at least 6 weeks after your surgery. Ask your doctor how long you should avoid heavy lifting.

How can I cope with my feelings?

After surgery for a serious illness, you may have new and upsetting feelings. Many people say they felt weepy, sad, worried, nervous, irritable, and angry at one time or another. You may find that you cannot control some of these feelings. If this happens, it's a good idea to seek emotional support.

The first step in coping is to talk about how you feel. Family and friends can help. Your nurse, doctor, and social worker can reassure, support, and guide you. It is always a good idea to let these professionals know how you, your family, and your friends are feeling emotionally. Many resources are available to patients and their families. Whether you are in the hospital or at home, the nurses, doctors, and social workers are here to help you and your family and friends handle the emotional aspects of your illness.
When is my first appointment after my surgery?

Your first appointment after surgery will be in 1 to 3 weeks after you leave the hospital. Your nurse will give you instructions on how to make this appointment, including the phone number to call.

During this appointment, your doctor will discuss the pathology results with you in detail.

What if I have other questions?

If you have any questions or concerns, please talk with your doctor or nurse. You can reach them Monday through Friday from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM at the numbers listed below.

Doctor _________________________ Telephone _____________________________

Nurse __________________________ Telephone _____________________________

After 5:00 PM, during the weekend, and on holidays, please call 212-639-2000 and ask for the doctor on call for your surgeon.

Call your doctor if you have:

- A temperature of 101°F (38.3°C) or higher
- Pain that does not get better with your medications
- Redness, swelling, or drainage from your incision that is foul smelling or pus-like
- No bowel movement for 3 days or longer
- Nausea or vomiting
- Jaundice (yellow skin or eyes)
- Diarrhea
- Constipation that does not get better in 2 to 3 days
- Any new symptom or physical change
- Any questions or concerns
How to Use Your Incentive Spirometer

This information will help you learn how to use your incentive spirometer.

About Your Incentive Spirometer

An incentive spirometer is a device that will expand your lungs by helping you to breathe more deeply and fully. The parts of your incentive spirometer are labeled in Figure 1.

Use your incentive spirometer after your surgery and do your deep breathing and coughing exercises. This will help keep your lungs active throughout your
recovery and prevent complications such as pneumonia.

How To Use Your Incentive Spirometer

Here is a video demonstrating how to use your incentive spirometer:

Please visit mskcc.org/pe/incentive_spirometer to watch this video.

Setting up your incentive spirometer

The first time you use your incentive spirometer, you will need to take the flexible tubing with the mouthpiece out of the bag. Stretch out the tubing and connect it to the outlet on the right side of the base (see Figure 1). The mouthpiece will be attached to the other end of the tubing.

Using your incentive spirometer

When you are using your incentive spirometer, make sure to breathe through your mouth. If you breathe through your nose the incentive spirometer will not work properly. You can plug your nose if you have trouble.

If you feel dizzy at any time, stop and rest. Try again at a later time.

To use your incentive spirometer, follow the steps below.

1. Sit upright in a chair or in bed. Hold the incentive spirometer at eye level.
   - If you had surgery on your chest or abdomen (belly), hug or hold a pillow to help splint or brace your incision (surgical cut) while you’re using the incentive spirometer. This will help decrease pain at your incision.

2. Put the mouthpiece in your mouth and close your lips tightly around it.
   
   Slowly breathe out (exhale) completely.

3. Breathe in (inhale) slowly through your mouth as deeply as you can. As you take the breath, you will see the piston rise inside the large column. While the piston rises, the indicator on the right should move upwards. It should stay in between the 2 arrows (see Figure 1).

4. Try to get the piston as high as you can, while keeping the indicator
between the arrows.

- If the indicator does not stay between the arrows, you are breathing either too fast or too slow.

5. When you get it as high as you can, hold your breath for 10 seconds, or as long as possible. While you’re holding your breath, the piston will slowly fall to the base of the spirometer.

6. Once the piston reaches the bottom of the spirometer, breathe out slowly through your mouth. Rest for a few seconds.

7. Repeat 10 times. Try to get the piston to the same level with each breath.

8. After each set of 10 breaths, try to cough, holding a pillow over your incision, as needed. Coughing will help loosen or clear any mucus in your lungs.

Repeat these steps every hour that you are awake.

Cover the mouthpiece of the incentive spirometer when you are not using it.
Patient-Controlled Analgesia (PCA)

This information will help you understand what patient-controlled analgesia (PCA) is and how to use your PCA pump.

PCA helps you control your pain by letting you give yourself pain medication. It uses a computerized pump to deliver pain medication into your vein (intravenous, or IV PCA) or into your epidural space, which is in your spine (see Figure 1). Whether you have an IV PCA or an epidural PCA depends on what you and your doctor decide is right for you.

PCA is not right for everyone. Some people may not be able to use PCA. Tell your doctor if you have weakness in your hands and think you may have trouble pushing the PCA button. Also, before you get PCA, tell your doctor if you have sleep apnea. This may affect the way we prescribe your medication. People who are confused or cannot follow these instructions should not use PCA.

Using the PCA

To give yourself pain medication, press the button attached to the pump when you have pain. The pump will deliver a safe dose that your doctor has prescribed.

Only you should push the PCA button. Family and friends should never push the button.
The pump can be programmed to deliver your medication in 2 ways:

- As needed. You get your pain medication only when you press the button. It will not allow you to get more medication than prescribed. The pump is set to allow only a certain number of doses per hour.

- Continuous. You get your pain medication at a constant rate all the time. This can be combined with the as needed mode. That allows you to take extra doses safely if you’re having pain.

Tell your doctor if your PCA is not helping with your pain. Also, tell your doctor if your pain changes, such as if it gets worse, feels different than before, or you feel pain in a new place. Your doctor may be able to change the medication to one that may work better for you.

**Side Effects**

Pain medication delivered by the PCA can have side effects. Tell your doctor or nurse if you have any of these problems:

- Constipation
- Nausea or vomiting
- Dry mouth
- Itching
- Changes in your vision, such as seeing things that aren’t there
- Drowsiness, dizziness, or confusion
- Weakness, numbness, or tingling in your arms or legs
- Difficulty urinating
- Any other side effects or problems

Your doctor may be able to give you a different medication that has fewer side effects.
Preventing Falls: What You Can Do

This information describes how you can prevent falls while you are in the hospital and at home.

Are You at Risk for Falls?

Anyone can fall, but some things make people more likely. Some risk factors for falls include:

- If you have fallen before
- Having a fear of falling
- Feeling weak, tired, or forgetful
- Having numbness or tingling in the legs or feet
- Having difficulty walking, or unsteady walking
- Having poor vision
- Feeling dizzy, lightheaded, or disoriented
- Using a walker or cane
- Having depression or anxiety
- Taking certain medications, such as
  - Laxatives
  - Water pills (diuretics)
  - Sleeping pills
  - Medications to prevent seizures
  - Some antidepressants
  - Pain medications
  - Fluids into a vein (called IV or intravenous fluids)
Any medication that makes you feel sleepy

How to Prevent Falls While You Are Visiting MSK

- Bring someone with you who can help you get around.
- Ask a member of MSK staff, such as a security guard, for a wheelchair to use while you are at MSK.
- Have someone help you while you’re in the dressing room or bathroom. Ask at the reception desk for help if there is no one with you.
- When getting up from a lying position, always sit at the side of the bed or exam table for a few minutes before you stand up.
- If you feel dizzy or weak, let someone know you need help. Many of the bathrooms have call bells that you can use to call for help.

How to Prevent Falls While You Are Hospitalized

Even though you may be able to safely walk by yourself at home, in the hospital you may be getting treatment or medication that can affect your ability to safely walk by yourself. That’s why we assess patients for their risk of falling throughout their hospitalization. Please follow the tips below to stay safe.

- Before you go to sleep, make sure that your nightlight is on. You can ask your nurse to turn it on, if needed. Keep all of your personal items (e.g., eyeglasses, water, book) within reach.
- If you feel dizzy or weak, call for help before getting out of bed.
- Before you get out of bed, sit at the side of your bed for a few minutes.
- Wear laced or closed-toe shoes or slippers with non-skid soles. Non-skid socks are available to all patients while in the hospital; ask your nurse if you need a pair. Non-skid socks can be purchased at the gift shop.
- Use the grab bars in the bathroom and railings in the hallways.
- Have your nurse take you to the bathroom whenever he or she is in your room and especially before bedtime. This is so you won’t have to get up in the middle of the night to use the bathroom.
Patients at higher risk for falling have additional steps to take in order to stay safe while in the hospital. These steps will be explained to you and your caregivers by your nursing staff as part of our Fall Prevention Program, including:

- Calling for assistance every time you need to get out of bed.
- Avoid bending over. If you drop something, call for help.
- Avoid leaning on furniture with wheels for support, such as your bedside table, overbed table, and IV pole.
- Calling right away if you see any spills that need to be wiped up. Every time we mop the floor a yellow sign will be posted to tell you that the floor is wet.
- Always wearing your glasses or hearing aid when you’re out of bed.
- Making sure we’ve done all we can to keep you safe, such as
  - Raising your bedrails
  - Keeping a clear path for you to get to the bathroom

How to Prevent Falls While You Are at Home

- Set up your furniture so that you can walk around without anything blocking your way.
- Use a nightlight or keep a flashlight close to you at night.
- Remove throw rugs or other loose items from your floor. If you have an area rug covering a slippery floor, make sure the rug does not have any
loose or fringed edges.

- If your bathroom is not close to your bedroom (or where you spend most of your time during the day), get a commode. Place it near you so you do not have to walk to the bathroom.

- Install grab bars and handrails next to your toilet and inside your shower. Never use towel racks to pull yourself up because they are not strong enough to hold your weight.

- Apply anti-slip stickers to the floor of your tub or shower.

- Buy a shower chair and a hand-held shower head so you can sit while taking a shower.

- When getting up from a lying position, always sit at the side of the bed or couch for a few minutes before you stand.

- Arrange items in your kitchen and bathroom cabinets at shoulder height so that you don’t have to bend too high or low.

If you are concerned about your risk for falling, please speak with your doctor or nurse.

Additional Resource

For more information about how to prevent falls at home, contact the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for the booklet, Check for Safety: A Home Fall Prevention Checklist for Older Adults. Copies are available in English and Spanish at http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/pub-res/toolkit/CheckListForSafety.htm or by calling 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636).
This section contains a list of MSK support services, as well as the resources that were referred to throughout this guide. These resources will help you prepare for your surgery and recover safely. Write down any questions you have and be sure to ask your doctor or nurse.
MSK Resources

**Anesthesia**
212-639-6840
Call with questions about anesthesia.

**Blood Donor Room**
212-639-7643
Call for more information if you are interested in donating blood or platelets.

**Bobst International Center**
888-675-7722
MSK welcomes patients from around the world. If you are an international patient, call for help coordinating your care.

**Chaplaincy Service**
212-639-5982
At MSK, our chaplains are available to listen, help support family members, pray, contact community clergy or faith groups, or simply be a comforting companion and a spiritual presence. Anyone can request spiritual support, regardless of formal religious affiliation. The interfaith chapel is located near the main lobby of Memorial Hospital, and is open 24 hours a day. If you have an emergency, please call the hospital operator and ask for the chaplain on call.

**Counseling Services**
646-888-0200
Many people find counseling helpful. We provide counseling for individuals, couples, families, and groups, as well as medications to help if you feel anxious or depressed.

**Integrative Medicine Service**
646-888-0800
Offers patients many services to complement traditional medical care, including music therapy, mind/body therapies, dance and movement therapy, yoga, and touch therapy.

**Look Good Feel Better Program**
800-227-2345
Learn techniques to help you feel better about your appearance by taking a workshop or visiting the program online at www.lookgoodfeelbetter.org.

**Patient-to-Patient Support Program**
212-639-5007
You may find it comforting to speak with a cancer survivor or caregiver who has been through a similar treatment. Through our Patient-to-Patient Support Program, we are able to offer you a chance to speak with former patients and caregivers.

**Patient Billing**
646-227-3378
Call Patient Billing with any questions regarding preauthorization with your insurance company. This is also called preapproval.

**Patient Representatives**
212-639-7202
Call if you have any questions about the Health Care Proxy Form or if you have any concerns about your care.
**Perioperative Clinical Nurse Specialist**  
212-639-5985  
Call if you have any questions about MSK releasing any information while you are having surgery.

**Private Nursing Options**  
212-639-6892  
You may request private nurses or companions. Call for more information.

**Resources for Life After Cancer (RLAC) Program**  
646-888-8106  
At MSK, care doesn’t end after active treatment. The RLAC Program is for patients and their families who have finished treatment. This program has many services, including seminars, workshops, support groups, counseling on life after treatment, and help with insurance and employment issues.

**Social Work**  
212-639-7020  
Social workers help patients, family, and friends deal with issues that are common for cancer patients. They provide individual counseling and support groups throughout the course of treatment, and can help you communicate with children and other family members. Our social workers can also help referring you to community agencies and programs, as well as financial resources if you're eligible.

**Tobacco Treatment Program**  
212-610-0507  
If you want to quit smoking, MSK has specialists who can help. Call for more information.

For additional online information, visit LIBGUIDES on MSK’s library website at http://library.mskcc.org or the Liver Cancer section of mskcc.org. You can also contact the library reference staff at 212-639-7439 for help.
External Resources

**Access-A-Ride**  
web.mta.info/nyct/paratran/guide.htm  
877-337-2017  
In New York City, the MTA offers a shared ride, door-to-door service for people with disabilities who are unable to take the public bus or subway.

**Air Charity Network**  
www.aircharitynetwork.org  
877-621-7177  
Provides travel to treatment centers.

**American Cancer Society (ACS)**  
www.cancer.org  
800-227-2345  
Offers a variety of information and services, including Hope Lodge, a free place for patients and caregivers to stay during cancer treatment.

**Cancer and Careers**  
www.cancerandcareers.org  
A comprehensive resource for education, tools, and events for employees with cancer.

**CancerCare**  
www.cancercare.org  
800-813-4673  
275 Seventh Avenue (Between West 25th & 26th Streets)  
New York, NY 10001  
Provides counseling, support groups, educational workshops, publications, and financial assistance.

**Cancer Support Community**  
www.cancersupportcommunity.org  
Provides support and education to people affected by cancer.

**Caregiver Action Network**  
www.caregiveraction.org  
800-896-3650  
Provides education and support for those who care for loved ones with a chronic illness or disability.

**Corporate Angel Network**  
www.corpangelnetwork.org  
866-328-1313  
Offers free travel to treatment across the country using empty seats on corporate jets.

**Gilda’s Club**  
www.gildasclubnyc.org  
212-647-9700  
A place where men, women, and children living with cancer find social and emotional support through networking, workshops, lectures, and social activities.
Good Days  
www.gooddaysfromcdf.org  
877-968-7233  
Offers financial assistance to pay for copayments during treatment. Patients must have medical insurance, meet the income criteria, and be prescribed medication that is part of the Good Days formulary.

Healthwell Foundation  
www.healthwellfoundation.org  
800-675-8416  
Provides financial assistance to cover copayments, health care premiums, and deductibles for certain medications and therapies.

Joe's House  
www.joeshouse.org  
877-563-7468  
Provides a list of places to stay near treatment centers for people with cancer and their families.

LGBT Cancer Project  
http://lgbtcancer.org  
Provides support and advocacy for the LGBT community, including an online support groups and a database of LGBT friendly clinical trials.

LIVESTRONG Fertility  
www.livestrong.org/we-can-help/fertility-services  
855-744-7777  
Provides reproductive information and support to cancer patients and survivors whose medical treatments have risks associated with infertility.

National Cancer Institute  
www.cancer.gov

National Cancer Legal Services Network  
www.nclsn.org  
Free cancer legal advocacy program.

National LGBT Cancer Network  
www.cancer-network.org  
Provides education, training, and advocacy for LGBT cancer survivors and those at risk.

Needy Meds  
www.needymeds.org  
Lists Patient Assistance Programs for brand and generic name medications.

NYRx  
www.nyrxplan.com  
Provides prescription benefits to eligible employees and retirees of public sector employers in New York State.
Partnership for Prescription Assistance
www.pparx.org
888-477-2669
Help qualifying patients without prescription drug coverage get free or low-cost medications.

Patient Access Network Foundation
www.panfoundation.org
866-316-7263
Provides assistance with copayments for patients with insurance.

Patient Advocate Foundation
www.patientadvocate.org
800-532-5274
Provides access to care, financial assistance, insurance assistance, job retention assistance, and access to the national underinsured resource directory.

RxHope
www.rxhope.com
877-267-0517
Provides assistance to help people obtain medications that they have trouble affording.