Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Getting Ready for Surgery

This information will help you get ready for your surgery at MSK's Memorial Hospital, Josie Robertson Surgery Center (JRSC), or MSK Monmouth. Review these instructions 10 days before your surgery.

Before your surgery

Ask about your medicine

You may need to stop taking certain medicine before your surgery. Your healthcare provider will talk with you about which you should and should not take. To learn more, read *How To Check if a Medicine or Supplement Has Aspirin, Other NSAIDs, Vitamin E, or Fish Oil* (www.mskcc.org/pe/check-med-supplement) and *Herbal Remedies and Cancer Treatment* (www.mskcc.org/pe/herbal-remedies).

Tell your healthcare provider if you're taking any pain medicine or anxiety medicine. It's important to keep taking them on schedule, even during your treatment. You may be able to take them the morning of your surgery, if needed.

GLP-1 medicines for weight loss

It's important to tell your healthcare provider if you take a GLP-1 medicine. You must follow special eating and drinking instructions before your surgery or procedure. **It is very important to follow these instructions if you have taken a GLP-1 medicine at any time in the last 30 days. If you do not follow them, your surgery or procedure may be delayed or canceled.**

- **Start following a clear liquid diet at 6 a.m. the day before your surgery or procedure.** Do not eat any solid food. Read *Clear Liquid Diet* (www.mskcc.org/pe/clear-liquid-diet) to learn more.

- **Stop drinking 8 hours before your arrival time.** Do not eat or drink anything after this time, including clear liquids. You can have small sips of water with your medicines.

To learn more, read *Eating and Drinking Before Your Surgery or Procedure When Taking GLP-1 Medicines* (www.mskcc.org/pe/eat-drink-glp1).

Here are some examples of GLP-1 medicines. There are others, so be sure your care team knows all the medicines you take. Sometimes, these are prescribed to help manage diabetes or other conditions. Other times, they're prescribed for weight loss.

• Semaglutide (Wegovy®, Ozempic®, Rybelsus®) • Dulaglutide (Trulicity®)	• Tirzepatide (Zepbound®, Mounjaro®) • Liraglutide (Saxenda®, Victoza®)

About sleep apnea

Sleep apnea is a common breathing problem. If you have sleep apnea, you stop breathing for short lengths of time while you're asleep. The most common type is obstructive sleep apnea (OSA). With OSA, your airway becomes fully blocked during sleep.

OSA can cause serious problems during and after surgery. Tell us if you have or think you might have sleep apnea. If you use a breathing device, such as a CPAP machine, bring it on the day of your surgery.

Arrange for someone to take you home

You must have a responsible care partner take you home after your procedure. A responsible care partner is someone who can help you get home safely. They should be able to contact your care team if they have any concerns. Make sure to plan this before the day of your procedure.

If you don't have a responsible care partner to take you home, call one of the agencies below. They'll send someone to go home with you. There's a charge for this service, and you'll need to provide transportation. It's OK to use a taxi or car service, but you still need a responsible care partner with you.

Agencies in New York
VNS Health: 888-735-8913
Caring People: 877-227-4649

Agencies in New Jersey
Caring People: 877-227-4649

We recommend you have someone to help you at home for the first 24 hours after surgery.

Fill out a Health Care Proxy form

If you have not already filled out a Health Care Proxy form, we recommend you do now. If you already filled one out or have any other advance directives, bring them to your next appointment.

A health care proxy is a legal document. It says who will speak for you if you cannot communicate for yourself. This person is called your health care agent.

- To learn about health care proxies and other advance directives, read *Advance Care Planning for People With Cancer and Their Loved Ones* (www.mskcc.org/pe/advance-care-planning).
- To learn about being a health care agent, read *How To Be a Health Care Agent* (www.mskcc.org/pe/health-care-agent).

Talk with a member of your care team if you have questions about filling out a Health Care Proxy form.

Buy supplies

4% chlorhexidine gluconate (CHG) solution antiseptic skin cleanser (such as Hibiclens®)

You may need to shower with a 4% CHG solution antiseptic skin cleanser before your surgery. Your healthcare provider will tell you if you do.

4% CHG solution is a skin cleanser that kills germs for 24 hours after you use it. Showering with it before your surgery will help lower your risk of infection after surgery. You can buy a 4% CHG solution antiseptic skin cleanser at your local pharmacy without a prescription.

Bowel prep supplies

You may need to do a bowel prep (clean out your bowels) before your surgery. Bowel prep is short for bowel preparation.

Your healthcare provider will tell you if you need to do bowel prep. Not all surgeries require a bowel prep.

If you need to do a bowel prep before your surgery, your healthcare provider will tell you how. They'll also tell you what supplies you need. You may also want to buy clear liquids to drink the day before your surgery. Read *Clear Liquid Diet* (www.mskcc.org/pe/clear-liquid-diet) for examples.

The day before your surgery

Note the time of your surgery

A staff member will call you after 2 p.m. the day before your surgery. If your surgery is scheduled for a Monday, they'll call you the Friday before. If you do not get a call by 7 p.m., call 212-639-5014.

The staff member will tell you what time to get to the hospital for your surgery. They'll also remind you where to go.

This will be one of the following locations.

In New York:

- Presurgical Center (PSC) on the 2nd floor
  1275 York Ave. (between East 67th and East 68th streets)
  Take the M elevator to the 2nd floor.
- Presurgical Center (PSC) on the 6th floor
  1275 York Ave. (between East 67th and East 68th streets)
  Take the B elevator to the 6th floor.
- Josie Robertson Surgery Center (JRSC)
  1133 York Avenue (between East 61st and East 62nd streets)

In New Jersey:

- MSK Monmouth
  480 Red Hill Rd.
  Middletown, NJ 07748

Visit www.msk.org/parking for parking information and directions to all MSK locations.

If you have any changes in your health or need to cancel your surgery for any reason, call your surgeon. Offices are usually open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. After 5 p.m., during the weekend, and on holidays, call 212-639-2000. Ask for the doctor who is covering for your surgeon.

The night before your surgery

Follow any special instructions your healthcare provider gave you about your diet or medicine.

Start your bowel prep, if needed

If your healthcare provider told you to do a bowel prep, you'll need to start it 1 day before your surgery. Follow the instructions they gave you.

Shower with a 4% CHG solution antiseptic skin cleanser (such as Hibiclens), if needed

If your healthcare provider told you to shower with a 4% CHG solution antiseptic skin cleanser before your surgery, do it the night before and the morning of your surgery. Follow these instructions.

1. Wash your hair with your usual shampoo and conditioner. Rinse your head well.
2. Wash your face and genital (groin) area with your usual soap. Rinse your body well with warm water.
3. Open the 4% CHG solution bottle. Pour some into your hand or a clean washcloth.
4. Move away from the shower stream. Rub the 4% CHG solution gently over your body from your neck to your feet. Do not put it on your face or genital

area.

5. Move back into the shower stream to rinse off the 4% CHG solution. Use warm water.
6. Dry yourself off with a clean towel.

Do not put on any lotion, cream, deodorant, makeup, powder, perfume, or cologne after your shower.

Instructions for eating

> **Important:** If you take a GLP-1 medicine, do not follow these instructions. Follow the instructions in *Eating and Drinking Before Your Surgery or Procedure When Taking GLP-1 Medicines* (www.mskcc.org/pe/eat-drink-glp1) instead.



Stop eating at midnight (12 a.m.) the night before your surgery or procedure. This includes hard candy and gum.

Your healthcare provider may have given you different instructions for when to stop eating. If so, follow their instructions. Some people need to fast (not eat) for longer before their surgery or procedure.

The day of your surgery

Follow any special instructions your healthcare provider gave you about your diet.

Instructions for drinking

Important: If you take a GLP-1 medicine, do not follow these instructions. Follow the instructions in *Eating and Drinking Before Your Surgery or Procedure When Taking GLP-1 Medicines* (www.mskcc.org/pe/eat-drink-glp1) instead.

Between midnight (12 a.m.) and 2 hours before your arrival time, only drink the liquids on the list below. Do not eat or drink anything else. Stop drinking 2 hours before your arrival time.

- Water.
- Clear apple juice, clear grape juice, or clear cranberry juice.
- Gatorade or Powerade.
- Black coffee or plain tea. It's OK to add sugar. Do not add anything else.
  - Do not add any amount of any type of milk or creamer. This includes plant-based milks and creamers.
  - Do not add flavored syrup.

If you have diabetes, pay attention to the amount of sugar in your drinks. It's easier to control your blood sugar levels if you include sugar-free, low-sugar, or no added sugar versions of these drinks.

It's helpful to stay hydrated before surgeries and procedures, so drink if you're thirsty. Do not drink more than you need. You'll get intravenous (IV) fluids during your surgery or procedure.



Stop drinking 2 hours before your arrival time. This includes water.

Your healthcare provider may have given you different instructions for when to stop drinking. If so, follow their instructions.

Take your medicine as instructed

Your healthcare provider may have told you to take certain medicine on the morning of your surgery. Take only those medicines with a sip of water.

Shower with a 4% CHG solution antiseptic skin cleanser (such as Hibiclens), if needed

If your healthcare provider told you to shower with a 4% CHG solution antiseptic skin cleanser, do it before you leave for the hospital. Use it the same way you did the night before.

What to bring

- ☐ A list of all the medicines you're taking, including prescription and over-the-counter medicine, patches, and creams.
- ☐ Your breathing device for sleep apnea (such as your CPAP device), if you have one.
- ☐ Your Health Care Proxy form and other advance directives, if you filled them out.
- ☐ 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 one.

Things to remember

- If you wear contact lenses, wear your glasses instead. Wearing contact lenses during surgery can damage your eyes.
- Do not wear any metal objects. Take off all jewelry, including body piercings. The tools used during your surgery can cause burns if they touch metal.
- Do not put on any lotion, cream, deodorant, makeup, powder, perfume, or cologne.
- Leave valuable items at home.
- If you're menstruating (have your monthly period), use a sanitary pad, not a tampon. You'll get disposable underwear and a pad, if needed.

Get ready for surgery

- When it's time to change for surgery, you'll get a hospital gown, robe, and nonskid socks to wear.
- The exact starting time of surgery may depend on the length of the surgery scheduled before yours. Your nurse will talk with you if there are any unexpected delays.
- Before you're taken into the operating room, you'll need to remove your hearing aids, dentures, prosthetic device(s), wig, and religious articles.

Visitors



We sometimes update our visitor policy to keep our patients and staff safe and healthy. Go to www.msk.org/visit for the most up-to-date information.

Helpful phone numbers

Anesthesia
212-639-6840
Call if you have questions about anesthesia (medicine to make you sleep during surgery).

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

Patient Billing
646-227-3378
Call if you have questions about preauthorization with your insurance company. This is also called preapproval.

Patient Representative Office
212-639-7202
Call if you have questions about the Health Care Proxy form or if you have concerns about your care.

Private Duty Nurses and Companions
646-357-9272
You can request private nurses or companions to care for you in the hospital and at home. Call for more information.

If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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