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 medications

You may need to stop taking certain medications before your surgery. Your healthcare provider will talk with you about which medications you should and shouldn't take. 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) Your healthcare provider will give you a copy.

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

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 Cancer Patients 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 your 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 preparation supplies

You may need to do a bowel preparation (clean out your bowels) before your surgery. Your healthcare provider will tell you if you do. Not all surgeries require a bowel preparation.

If you need to do a bowel preparation 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 the resource *Clear Liquid Diet* (www.mskcc.org/pe/clear_liquid_diet) for examples.

The Day Before Your Surgery

A staff member from the Admitting Office 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 don't get a call by 7 p.m., call 212-639-5014.

The staff member will tell you what time to arrive at 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 Avenue (between East 67th and East 68th Streets)

M Elevator to 2nd Floor

- Presurgical Center (PSC) on the 6th floor
  1275 York Avenue (between East 67th and East 68th Streets)
  B elevator to 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 Road
  Middletown, NJ 07748

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 Evening Before Your Surgery

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

Start your bowel preparation, if needed

If your healthcare provider told you to do a bowel preparation, 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. Use your normal shampoo to wash your hair. Rinse your head well.

2. Use your normal soap to wash your face and genital area. 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. Don’t 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 after your shower.
7. Don’t put on any lotion, cream, deodorant, makeup, powder, perfume, or cologne after your shower.

Sleep

Go to bed early and get a full night’s sleep.

Instructions for eating and drinking before your surgery



- **Stop eating 8 hours before your arrival time.**
  - Your healthcare provider may tell you to stop eating earlier. If they do, follow their instructions.
- 8 hours before your arrival time, do not eat or drink anything except these clear liquids:
  - Water.
  - Soda.
  - Clear juices, such as lemonade, apple, and cranberry juices. Do not drink orange juice or juices with pulp.
  - Black coffee or tea (without any type of milk or creamer).

- Sports drinks, such as Gatorade®.
- ClearFast CF(Preop)® or Ensure® Pre-Surgery clear carbohydrate drink.
- Gelatin, such as Jell-O®.

You can keep having these until 2 hours before your arrival time.

The Day of Your Surgery

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

Instructions for drinking before your surgery



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

Take your medications as instructed

Your healthcare provider may have told you to take certain medications on the morning of your surgery. Take only those medications 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 medications you're taking, including prescription and over-the-counter medications, 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 completed them.
- ☐ 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.
- 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.
- Don’t put on any lotion, cream, deodorant, makeup, powder, perfume, or cologne.
- Leave valuable items (such as credit cards, jewelry, and your checkbook) 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

- To keep patients and staff safe and healthy during the COVID-19 pandemic, we've made updates to our visitor policy. Visit www.mskcc.org/visit for more information.

Helpful Phone Numbers

Anesthesia
212-639-6840
Call if you have questions about anesthesia (medication 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
917-862-6373
You can request private nurses or companions to care for you in the hospital and at home. Call for more information.

If you have any questions, contact a member of your care team directly. If you're a patient at MSK and you need to reach a provider after 5 p.m., during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000.

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

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