Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# Information for Family and Friends for the Day of Surgery

This information explains what to expect on the day your friend or family member has surgery at Memorial Hospital, MSK's main hospital.



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.

## Before the surgery

We will ask the patient for the contact information for the person who will meet with the surgeon after the surgery. This person will also get updates from the nurse liaison during the surgery.

If this is an outpatient procedure, we will ask for the contact information for the person who will take them home. Patients having a procedure with anesthesia (medicine to make them sleep) must have a care partner who will take them home.

Once the patient checks in at the concierge desk, they will go to the Presurgical Center (PSC). There, they will be examined before their surgery. Sometimes, they may need to wait before they are admitted to the PSC.

**Adult patients in the PSC may have 1 visitor at a time. Pediatric patients in the PSC may have up to 2 visitors at a time.** Other visitors can wait in the lobby or cafeteria, if there is enough room. Otherwise, they must leave MSK until the patient is able to have a visitor after the procedure. Any visitor under the age of

18 must be with an adult who can actively supervise them throughout their visit.

When the operating room (OR) is ready, a member of the surgical team will take the patient into the OR. They will get the patient ready for surgery.

Please remember the following:

- **Do not bring food or drinks to the waiting area.** Patients must not eat or drink before their surgery or procedure.
- Our patients are at high risk for infection. Do not visit if you have any COVID-19, cold. or flu symptoms. This includes fever, sneezing, sniffles, or a cough.
- You must wear a mask in all patient hospital rooms. Please see our Visitor Policy for information about where you must wear a mask.
- We ask patients not to bring any valuable items with them to the hospital. Anything valuable must be left at home or with the care partner.
- Sometimes surgeries are 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. This is where you will get updates from the nurse liaison. If there is not enough room in the lobby or cafeteria, visitors must leave MSK. They can return when the patient is able to have a visitor after the procedure.

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.
- Wireless Internet access is available in most areas of the hospital. The Wi-Fi network name is MSK_guest. You can also use the computers in the room off the main lobby.
- Please be respectful of others while using your cellphone. Use the designated area for any calls on your cellphone. It may be helpful to bring your phone charger with you to the hospital.

- The Mary French Rockefeller All Faith Chapel is an interfaith chapel. It's in room M106 near the main lobby on the 1st floor. It's open 24 hours a day for meditation and prayer.

## Surgery updates

A nurse liaison will keep you updated on the progress of the patient's surgery. They will give you information about the patient. The nurse liaison will call a family member's cellphone to give an update.

To contact the nurse liaison:

- From outside of the hospital, call 212-639-2000. Ask for beeper 9000.
- Ask the information desk staff to contact the nurse liaison for you.

# After the surgery

## Limited visitors to patients in the Post Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU)

After surgery, we will take the patient to the PACU. The PACU is sometimes called the recovery room.

When patients first get to the PACU, they're often sleepy and want to rest. A staff member will come get you when your loved one is ready for a visit. **Do not go into the PACU on your own.**

**Adult patients** in the PACU are allowed 1 visitor at a time. That visit can last 15 to 30 minutes. Patients in the PACU can have up to 2 visitors a day, between 10 a.m. and 10 p.m.

**Pediatric patients** in the PACU are allowed 2 visitors at a time between 10 a.m. and 10 p.m. Outside those hours (after 10 p.m. and before 10 a.m.), pediatric patients are allowed 1 visitor. There's no time limit on visiting a child.

**Outpatients** are allowed 1 visitor a day, for about 15 to 30 minutes. To let the patient rest and recover, we will coordinate the timing of this visit. It will be close to the patient's discharge time. Your care team will let you know when you

can have a visitor.

### Overnight visitors in the PACU

Most patients cannot have visitors in the PACU overnight. Only these patients can have overnight visitors:

- Pediatric patients may have 1 visitor stay with them overnight.
- Patients recovering after ambulatory surgery may have 1 visitor stay with them overnight. Ambulatory surgery is surgery with an expected hospital stay of less than 24 hours. The patient's care team will tell them if they're having ambulatory surgery and are allowed an overnight visitor.

## Guidelines for visiting patients in the PACU

Please follow these guidelines before your visit in the PACU:

- Put on an alcohol-based hand sanitizer (such as Purell®) or wash your hands before entering. There are hand sanitizer stations located throughout the hospital.
- Do not bring food or flowers into the PACU.
    - Flowers can be stored in the flower room located on the entrance floor of the main hospital. Patients usually are allowed to have them once they move to their hospital room.

While visiting someone in the PACU:

- Speak quietly.
- Respect the privacy of other patients 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 delay your visit.
- After your visit, a staff member will direct you to elevators that will take you to the lobby.

We will give you a phone number to call into the PACU. When you call, we can

update you about the patient's recovery. If you need more updates from the PACU, please identify 1 person who will call.

As soon as the patient is awake and ready, we will give them their personal belongings, including their phone. If they don't have a phone, we will give them a way to contact you.

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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