Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Preparing for Your Skin Surgery

This information will help you prepare for your skin surgery at Memorial Sloan Kettering (MSK).

Follow the instructions below before your skin surgery. This will help lower the risk of problems during your surgery. Your healthcare provider will review these instructions with you.

Preparing for Your Surgery

Tell us if you:

- Have had any lymph nodes removed.
- Have any of the following:
  - A heart valve replacement.
  - Bacterial endocarditis (an infection of the valves and inner lining of your heart).
  - A defibrillator or pacemaker.
  - Bleeding problems.
  - A prosthesis (including a total joint replacement).
- Are taking antibiotics before a dental procedure.
- Are getting treatment that lowers your immune system (such as taking prednisone (Deltasone®) or getting chemotherapy or radiation treatments).

Ask about your medications

You may need to stop taking some of your medications before your procedure. Talk with your healthcare provider about which medications are safe for you to stop taking. We have included some common examples below.

Your healthcare provider will give you instructions for when to stop taking these medications, if needed. **Do not stop taking any prescription medications without talking with your healthcare provider.**

Anticoagulants (blood thinners)

Tell your healthcare provider if you take any blood thinners (medications that affect the way your blood clots). Whether they recommend you stop taking the medication depends on the reason you're taking it.

Here is a list of common blood thinners. This list doesn't include all blood thinners. Ask your healthcare provider if you're unsure about any medications.

aspirin (Ecotrin®, Aggrenox®)	dabigatran (Pradaxa®)	heparin
apixaban (Eliquis®)	dalteparin (Fragmin®)	tinzaparin (Innohep®)
cilostazol (Pletal®)	dipyridamole (Aggrenox®)	warfarin (Coumadin®)
clopidogrel (Plavix®)	enoxaparin (Lovenox®)	

Aspirin, other nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), and vitamin E

Aspirin, other NSAIDs, and vitamin E can increase your risk of bleeding during surgery. Don't take medications that have them unless your healthcare provider says it's okay.

Here is a list of common NSAIDs and medications containing aspirin or other NSAIDs. This list doesn't include all NSAIDs or medications that contain them. Ask your healthcare provider if you're unsure about any medications.

Advil®	Bayer® (most formulations)	Excedrin® Extra-Strength Analgesic Tablets and Caplets	indomethacin	Nuprin®
Aleve®	Bufferin® (most formulations)	Feldene®	Midol®	Percodan® Tablets
Alka Seltzer®	Children's aspirin	Fiorinal® (most formulations)	Motrin®	piroxicam
Anacin®	Children's Motrin®	Ibuprin	nabumetone	Relafen®
Anaprox DS®	Clinoril®	ibuprofen	Naprosyn®	Voltaren®
Arthritis Pain Formula	diclofenac	Indocin®	naproxen	sulindac

For more information, read our resource *How To Check if a Medicine or Supplement Has Aspirin, Other NSAIDs, Vitamin E, or Fish Oil* (www.mskcc.org/pe/check-med-supplement).

3 Days Before Your Surgery

Call your healthcare provider's office if you or someone in your household is sick (such as a cold, fever, infection, or upset stomach). Your surgery may need to be rescheduled.

Stop taking herbal remedies and other supplements

Stop taking herbal remedies and other dietary supplements, such as those in the list below. This list doesn't include all herbal remedies or other dietary supplements. Ask your healthcare provider if you're unsure about any supplements.

If you take a multivitamin, ask your healthcare provider if you should keep taking it.

Echinacea	Garlic	Gingko (also known as gingko biloba)

Ginseng	Turmeric	St. John's Wort
Valerian	Vitamin E	Herbal formulas

For more information, read our resource *Herbal Remedies and Cancer Treatment* (www.mskcc.org/pe/herbal-remedies).

Arrange for someone to take you home, if needed

You may need to have a responsible care partner take you home after your procedure. If you do, your care team will give you more information. Talk with them if you have any questions.

If you need to have someone take you home but don't have a person to do this, call one of the agencies below. They will send someone to go home with you. There's usually a charge for this service, and you will need to provide transportation.

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

1 Day Before Your Surgery

- Don't drink alcohol for 1 day before your surgery.
- Shower and shampoo your hair the night or morning before your surgery.
- Take your usual medications, unless your healthcare provider gives you other instructions.

The Day of Your Surgery

- You can eat and drink as usual. If you're having Mohs surgery, bring lunch or a snack with you.
- Don't put makeup, moisturizers, or shaving lotions on the area of surgery.
- Wear loose-fitting clothes or a button-down shirt.
- Bring your usual medications (such as diabetes medications) that you may need during the day.

Call Your Healthcare Provider if You:

- Have to cancel or change your surgery appointment.
- Will be traveling right after your surgery. This may affect your appointment.
- Have any questions or concerns.

Call Your Healthcare Provider At:

- 908-542-3395 - Basking Ridge
- 212-639-2000 - Manhattan

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 332-699-7260.

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

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