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PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# Presurgical Medical Assessment for Seniors

This information explains what to expect during your presurgical medical assessment with your geriatrician at Memorial Sloan Kettering (MSK) and answers frequently asked questions.

As adults get older, they begin to have different medical needs than younger adults. Geriatrics focuses on the care of older adults. The healthcare providers who care for them are called geriatricians.

You will have an appointment with a geriatrician before your surgery. During this appointment, you and your geriatrician will:

- Discuss any health conditions you may have, such as:
  - High blood pressure
  - Lung or breathing issues
  - High cholesterol
  - Heart disease

- Diabetes
- Alzheimer's disease (disease of the brain that causes memory loss)
- Identify any problems that you may have during your surgery.
- Plan any care you need to reduce your risk for these problems.

## **Frequently Asked Questions About the Presurgical Medical Assessment**

### **Why do I need to have this appointment?**

Your surgeon referred you for this appointment because:

- You're a senior
- You may have other health conditions
- You're taking several medications (including a blood thinner)
- You have abnormal test results

### **How do I make this appointment?**

Your surgeon's assistant will schedule this appointment for you. They will tell you the exact date, time, and location of your appointment.

## How should I prepare for my appointment?

- Your geriatrician's assistant will call you 24 to 48 hours before your appointment to confirm the appointment. They will also ask you for the contact information of your primary care provider and other specialists outside of MSK.
- An office coordinator will ask you to complete an Electronic Rapid Fitness Assessment (ERFA) form before your visit.
- You can eat and take your medications as usual the day of your appointment.
- Bring the following with you:
  - A list of all the medications you're taking, including patches, creams, vitamins, supplements, or natural or home remedies. Write down the doses and how often you take each medication.
  - Any recent test results from outside of MSK.
  - Contact information for your primary care provider and other specialists, if you haven't already given it to your geriatrician already.

## What should I expect during my appointment?

Your appointment will be like a physical exam. Your nurse will measure your blood pressure, temperature, breathing

rate, and heart rate. They will ask you questions about your medical history, any medications you're taking, and any symptoms that you may have.

You will then see your geriatrician. They will review the information taken by your nurse and do a physical exam. Your geriatrician will go over any problems that could happen during or after your surgery and tell you what you and your caregiver can do to decrease your risks. They will tell you which medications you can take until the morning of your surgery.

Your geriatrician will also determine whether you need any additional tests before your surgery. Your geriatrician or nurse will tell you when these tests will be scheduled and how to prepare for them.

### **How long will my appointment take?**

Your appointment will take at least 1 hour.

### **What if I have questions after my appointment?**

If you have any questions related to what was discussed during your appointment, talk with your geriatrician. If you have any questions about your surgery, talk with your surgeon.

## **Will my geriatrician talk with my healthcare providers outside of MSK?**

Your geriatrician may speak with your primary care provider or other specialists outside of MSK to get more information about your medical history, previous tests, or both.

## **Will my geriatrician talk with my surgeon or any other healthcare providers I see at MSK?**

All your test results and notes from your healthcare providers are in your electronic medical record at MSK. Your surgeon and other healthcare providers at MSK can see this information to help plan your care.

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](http://www.mskcc.org/pe) to search our virtual library.

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