

About Your Lumpectomy Surgery

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About Your Surgery

This guide will help you prepare for your breast surgical excision, biopsy, or lumpectomy surgery at Memorial Sloan Kettering (MSK), and help you understand what to expect during your recovery. Read through this guide before your surgery and then use it as a reference in the days leading up to your surgery. Bring this guide with you every time you come to MSK, including the day of your surgery, so that you and your healthcare team can refer to it throughout your care.

You are having surgery to examine a suspicious breast lesion (a lump) or to treat breast cancer. You are having:

- Surgical excision (removal)
- Lumpectomy
- Other _____

A surgical excision removes a lesion that is at a high risk of being cancer. This lesion is then tested to see if it is cancer. Not all lesions are cancerous—some are benign (not cancerous).

A lumpectomy is a surgery that removes a malignant (cancerous) tumor from your breast. It removes only the tumor and a small area of normal tissue around it. A lumpectomy is a breast conserving surgery that allows you to keep your breast shape and, usually, your nipple.

During Your Surgery

Your surgeon will make an incision (a surgical cut) in your breast and remove the lesion, along with a small area of normal tissue around the tumor. He or she will then close the incision with sutures (stitches), trying to keep the breast looking much like it did before surgery.

The information in this section will help you prepare for your surgery. Read through this section when your surgery is scheduled and refer to it as your surgery date gets closer. It contains important information about what you need to do before your surgery. Write down any questions you have and be sure to ask your doctor or nurse.

Preparing for Your Surgery

You and your healthcare team will work together to prepare for your surgery.

About Drinking Alcohol

The amount of alcohol you drink can affect you during and after your surgery. It is important that you talk with your healthcare providers about your alcohol intake so that we can plan your care.

- Stopping alcohol suddenly can cause seizures, delirium, and death. If we know you are at risk for these complications, we can prescribe medication to help prevent them.
- If you drink alcohol regularly, you may be at risk for other complications during and after surgery. These include bleeding, infections, heart problems, greater dependence on nursing care, and longer hospital stay.

Here are things you can do to prevent problems before your surgery:

- Be honest with your healthcare provider about how much alcohol you drink.
- Try to stop drinking alcohol once your surgery is planned. If you develop a headache, nausea, increased anxiety, or cannot sleep after you stop drinking, tell your doctor right away. These are early signs of alcohol withdrawal and can be treated.
- Tell your healthcare provider if you cannot stop drinking.
- Ask us any questions you have about drinking and surgery. As always, all of your treatment information will be kept confidential.

Help us keep you safe during your surgery by telling us if any of the following statements apply to you, even if you aren't sure.

- I take a blood thinner. Some examples are heparin, warfarin (Coumadin®), clopidogrel (Plavix®), enoxaparin (Lovenox®), and tinzaparin (Innohep®). There are others, so be sure your doctor knows all the medications you're taking.
- I take prescription medications.
- I take any over-the-counter medications, herbs, vitamins, minerals, or natural or home remedies.
- I have a pacemaker, automatic implantable cardioverter-defibrillator (AICD), or other heart device.
- I have sleep apnea.
- I have had a problem with anesthesia in the past.
- I have allergies, including to latex.
- I am not willing to receive a blood transfusion.
- I drink alcohol.
- I smoke.
- I use recreational drugs.

About Smoking

People who smoke can have breathing problems when they have surgery. Stopping even for a few days before surgery can help. If you smoke, your nurse will refer you to our Tobacco Treatment Program. You can also reach the program at 212-610-0507.

About Sleep Apnea

Sleep apnea is a common breathing disorder that causes a person to stop breathing for short periods while sleeping. The most common type is obstructive sleep apnea (OSA). This means that the airway becomes completely blocked during sleep, so no air can get through. OSA can cause serious problems when you have surgery. Please tell us if you have sleep apnea or if you think you might have it. If you use a breathing machine (such as a CPAP) for sleep apnea, bring it with you the day of your surgery.

Within **30** Days of Your Surgery

Presurgical Testing

Before your surgery, you will have an appointment for presurgical testing (PST). The date, time, and location of your PST appointment will be printed on the appointment reminder from your surgeon's office.

You can eat and take your usual medications the day of your PST appointment. During your appointment, you will meet with a nurse practitioner who works closely with anesthesiology staff (doctors and specialized nurses who will be giving you medication to put you to sleep during your surgery). He or she will review your medical and surgical history with you. You may have tests, including an electrocardiogram (EKG) to check your heart rhythm, a chest x-ray, blood tests, and any other tests necessary to plan your care. Your nurse practitioner may also recommend you see other healthcare providers.

Your nurse practitioner will talk with you about which medications you should take the morning of your surgery. To help you remember, we've left space for you to write these medications down on page 10 of this guide.

It is very helpful if you bring the following with you to your PST appointment:

- A list of all the medications you are taking, including patches and creams.
- Results of any tests done outside of MSK, such as a cardiac stress test, echocardiogram (echo), or carotid doppler study.
- The name(s) and telephone number(s) of your doctor(s).

Complete a Health Care Proxy Form

If you haven't already completed a Health Care Proxy form, we recommend you complete one now. A health care proxy is a legal document that identifies the person who will speak for you if you are unable to communicate for yourself. The person you identify is called your health care agent. If you are interested in completing a Health Care Proxy form, talk with your nurse. If you have completed one already, or if you have any other advanced directive, bring it with you to your next appointment.

Exercise

Try to do aerobic exercise every day, such as walking at least 1 mile, swimming, or biking. If it is cold outside, use stairs in your home or go to a mall or shopping market. Walking will help your body get into its best condition for your surgery and make your recovery faster and easier.

Eat a Healthy Diet

You should eat a well-balanced, healthy diet before your surgery. If you need help with your diet talk to your doctor or nurse about meeting with a dietitian.

10 Days Before Your Surgery

Stop Taking Certain Medications

If you take vitamin E, stop taking it 10 days before your surgery. If you take aspirin, ask your surgeon whether you should continue. Medications such as aspirin, medications that contain aspirin, and vitamin E can cause bleeding. For more information, please read *Common Medications Containing Aspirin and Other Nonsteroidal Anti-inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs)*, located in this section.

Purchase Hibiclens® Skin Cleanser

Hibiclens is a skin cleanser that kills germs for 6 hours after using it. Showering with Hibiclens before surgery will help reduce your risk of infection after surgery. Hibiclens is available at your local pharmacy without a prescription.



7 Days Before Your Surgery

Stop Taking Herbal Remedies and Supplements

Stop taking herbal remedies or supplements 7 days before your surgery. If you take a multivitamin, talk with your doctor or nurse about whether you should continue. For more information, please read *Herbal Remedies and Cancer Treatment*, located in this section.

Watch a Virtual Tour

This video will give you an idea of what to expect when you come to Memorial Sloan Kettering's main hospital on the day of your surgery.

 www.mskcc.org/pe/day-your-surgery

2 Days Before Your Surgery

Stop Taking Certain Medications

Stop taking nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) such as ibuprofen (e.g., Advil®, Motrin®) and naproxen (e.g., Aleve®). These medications can cause bleeding. For more information, please read *Common Medications Containing Aspirin and Other Nonsteroidal Anti-inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs)*, located in this section.

1 Day Before Your Surgery

Note the Time of Your Surgery

A clerk from the Admitting Office will call you after 2:00 PM the day before your surgery. He or she will tell you what time you should arrive at the hospital for your surgery. If you are scheduled for surgery on a Monday, you will be called on the Friday before. If you do not receive a call by 7:00 PM, please call 212-639-5014.



Use this area to write in information when the clerk calls:

Date: _____ Time: _____

MSK Surgical Day Hospital (SDH)
1275 York Avenue, between East 67th and East 68th Streets
M elevator to the 2nd floor

Shower With Hibiclens

The night before your surgery, shower using the Hibiclens solution. To use Hibiclens, open the bottle and pour some solution into your hand or a washcloth. Rub it gently over your body from your neck to your waist and rinse. Do not let the solution get into your eyes, ears, mouth, or genital area. Do not use any other soap. Dry yourself off with a clean towel after your shower.

Sleep

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



Do not eat or drink anything after midnight the night before your surgery. This includes water, hard candy, and gum.

Morning of Your Surgery

Shower With Hibiclens

Shower using Hibiclens just before you leave for the hospital. Use the Hibiclens the same way you did the night before. Do not use any other soap. Do not put on any lotion, cream, powder, deodorant, makeup, or perfume after your shower.

Take Your Medications as Instructed

If your doctor or nurse practitioner instructed you to take certain medications the morning of your surgery, take only those medications with a sip of water. Depending on what medications you take and the surgery you're having, this may be all, some, or none of your usual morning medications.

Medication	Dose	Doctor/Nurse
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Medication	Dose	Doctor/Nurse
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Medication	Dose	Doctor/Nurse
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Medication	Dose	Doctor/Nurse
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Do not eat or drink anything the morning of your surgery. This includes water, hard candy, and gum. Take any medication as instructed with a small sip of water.

Things to Remember

- Do not put on any lotions, creams, deodorants, makeup, powders, or perfumes.
- Do not wear any metal objects. Remove all jewelry, including body piercings. The equipment used during your surgery can cause burns if it touches metal.
- Leave valuables, such as credit cards, jewelry, or your checkbook at home.
- Before you are taken into the operating room, you will need to remove your eyeglasses, hearing aids, dentures, prosthetic device(s), wig, and religious articles, such as a rosary.
- If you wear contact lenses, wear your glasses instead.

- _____
- _____
- _____



What to Bring

- A supportive bra, such as a sports bra, to wear after your surgery.
- Only the money you may need for a newspaper, bus, taxi, or parking.
- Your portable music player, if you choose. However, someone will need to hold this item for you when you go into surgery.
- Your breathing machine for sleep apnea (such as your CPAP), if you have one.
- If you have a case for your personal items, such as eyeglasses, hearing aid(s), dentures, prosthetic device(s), wig, and religious articles such as a rosary, bring it with you.
- Your Health Care Proxy form, if you have completed one.
- This guide. Your healthcare team will use this guide to teach you how to care for yourself after your surgery.
- _____
- _____
- _____

Parking When You Arrive

Parking at MSK is available in the garage on East 66th Street between York and First Avenues. To reach the garage, turn onto East 66th Street from York Avenue. The garage is located about a quarter of a block in from York Avenue, on the right-hand (north) side of the street. There is a pedestrian tunnel that you can walk through that connects the garage to the hospital. If you have questions about prices, call 212- 639-2338.

There are also other garages located on East 69th Street between First and Second Avenues, East 67th Street between York and First Avenues, and East 65th Street between First and Second Avenues.

Once You're in the Hospital

You will be asked to state and spell your name and date of birth many times. This is for your safety. People with the same or similar names may be having surgery on the same day.

Get Dressed for Surgery

You will be given a hospital gown, robe, and nonskid socks.



P = Parking
M = Memorial Sloan Kettering

Meet With Your Nurse

Your nurse will meet with you before your surgery. Tell him or her the dose of any medications (including patches and creams) you took after midnight and the time you took them.

Meet With Your Anesthesiologist

He or she will:

- Review your medical history with you.
- Talk with you about your comfort and safety during your surgery.
- Talk with you about the kind of anesthesia you will receive.
- Answer any questions you may have about your anesthesia.

Marking Your Surgical Site

In addition to being asked your name and birth date, you may also be asked the name of your surgeon, what operation you are having, and which side is being operated on. Your surgeon or another member of the surgical team will use a marker to initial the site on your body that will be operated on. This is for your safety and ensures that all members of your surgical team understand the plan for your surgery.

Prepare for Surgery

Once your nurse has seen you, 1 or 2 visitors can keep you company as you wait for your surgery to begin. When it is time for your surgery, your visitor(s) will be shown to the waiting area. Your visitors should read *Information for Family and Friends for the Day of Surgery* located in this section.

You will walk into the operating room or you can be taken in on a stretcher. A member of the operating room team will help you onto the operating bed. Compression boots may be placed on your lower legs. These gently inflate and deflate to help circulation in your legs.

Your anesthesiologist will place an intravenous (IV) line into a vein, usually in your arm or hand. The IV line will be used to give you fluids and anesthesia (medication to make you sleep) during your surgery.

Common Medications Containing Aspirin and Other Nonsteroidal Anti-inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs)

This information will help you identify medications that contain aspirin and other nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs). It's important to stop these medications before many cancer treatments.

Medications such as aspirin and other NSAIDs, vitamin E, and COX-2 inhibitors can increase your risk of bleeding during cancer treatment. These medications affect your platelets, which are blood cells that clot to prevent bleeding. If you take aspirin or other NSAIDs, vitamin E, or a COX-2 inhibitor such as celecoxib (Celebrex[®]), tell your doctor or nurse. He or she will tell you if you need to stop taking these medications before your treatment. You will also find instructions in the information about the treatment you're having.

If you're having surgery:

- Stop taking medications that contain aspirin or vitamin E 10 days before your surgery or as directed by your doctor. If you take aspirin because you've had a problem with your heart or you've had a stroke, be sure to talk with your doctor before you stop taking it.
- Stop taking NSAIDs 48 hours before your surgery or as directed by your doctor.
- Ask your doctor if you should continue taking a COX-2 inhibitor.

If you're having a procedure in Radiology (including Interventional Radiology, Interventional Mammography, and General Radiology):

- If you take aspirin because you've had a problem with your heart or you've had a stroke, be sure to talk with your doctor before you stop taking it. If your doctor instructs you to stop taking aspirin, you should stop 5 days before your procedure or as directed by your doctor.
- Stop taking NSAIDs 24 hours before your procedure.
- Stop taking medications that contain vitamin E 10 days before your procedure, or as directed by your doctor.

Chemotherapy can decrease your platelet count, which can increase your risk of bleeding. Whether you're just starting chemotherapy or you've been receiving it, talk with your doctor or nurse before taking aspirin or NSAIDs.

Medications are often called by their brand name, which can make it difficult to know their ingredients. To help you identify medications that contain aspirin, other NSAIDs, and vitamin E, please review the list of common medications in this leaflet. While this list includes the most common products, there are others. Please check with your healthcare provider if you aren't sure. Always be sure your doctor knows all the medications you're taking, both prescription and over-the-counter.

The following common medications contain aspirin:

Alka Seltzer®	Cama® Arthritis Pain Reliever	Genprin®	Roxiprin®
Anacin®	COPE®	Gensan®	Saleta®
Arthritis Pain Formula	Dasin®	Heartline®	Salocol®
Arthritis Foundation Pain Reliever®	Easprin®	Headrin®	Sodol®
ASA Enseals®	Ecotrin (most formulations)	Isollyl®	Soma® Compound Tablets
ASA Suppositories®	Empirin® Aspirin (most formulations)	Lanorinal®	Soma Compound with Codeine Tablets
Ascriptin® and Ascriptin A/D	Epromate®	Lortab® ASA Tablets	St. Joseph® Adult Chewable Aspirin
Aspergum®	Equagesic Tablets	Magnaprin®	Supac®
Asprimox®	Equazine®	Marnal®	Synalgos® DC Capsules
Axotal®	Excedrin® Extra-Strength Analgesic Tablets and Caplets	Micrainin®	Tenol-Plus®
Azdone®	Excedrin Migraine	Momentum®	Trigesic®
Bayer® (most formulations)	Fiorgen®	Norgesic Forte® (most formulations)	Talwin® Compound
BC® Powder and Cold Formulations	Fiorinal®	Norwich® Aspirin	Vanquish® Analgesic Caplets
Bufferin®	Fiorinal® (most formulations)	PAC® Analgesic Tablets	Wesprin® Buffered
Bufferin® (most formulations)	Fiortal®	Orphengesic®	Zee-Seltzer®
Buffets II®	Gelpirin®	Painaid®	ZORprin®
Buffex®		Panasal®	
		Percodan® Tablets	
		Persistin®	
		Robaxisal® Tablets	

The following common medications are NSAIDs that do not contain aspirin:

Advil®	Children's Motrin®	Indomethacin	Mobic®	Piroxicam
Advil Migraine	Clinoril®	Indocin®	Motrin	Ponstel®
Aleve®	Daypro®	Ketoprofen	Nabumetone	Relafen®
Anaprox DS®	Diclofenac	Ketorolac	Nalfon®	Saleta 200
Ansaid®	Etodolac®	Lodine®	Naproxen	Sulindac
Arthrotec®	Feldene®	Meclofenamate	Naprosyn®	Toradol®
Bayer Select Pain Relief	Fenoprofen	Mefenamic Acid	Nuprin®	Voltaren®
Formula Caplets	Flurbiprofen	Meloxicam	Orudis®	
Celebrex	Genpril®	Menadol®	Oxaprozin	
	Ibuprofen	Midol®	PediaCare Fever®	

Most multivitamins contain vitamin E, so if you take a multivitamin be sure to check the label. The following products contain vitamin E:

Amino-Opt-E	Aquavit	E-400 IU	E complex-600
Aquasol E	D'alpha E	E-1000 IU Softgels	Vita-Plus E

Acetaminophen (Tylenol®) is generally safe to take during your cancer treatment. It doesn't affect platelets, so it will not increase your chance of

bleeding. The following common medications contain acetaminophen; those in bold require a prescription:

Acephen®	Datril®	Norco®	Tylenol with
Aceta® with Codeine	Di-Gesic®	Panadol®	Codeine No. 3
Acetaminophen	Esgic®	Percocet®	Vanquish
with Codeine	Excedrin P.M.	Repan	Vicodin®
Aspirin-Free Anacin	Fiorcet®	Roxicet®	Wygesic®
Arthritis Pain Formula	Lorcet®	Talacen®	Zydone®
Aspirin-Free	Lortab	Tempra®	
Darvocet-N 100®	Naldegescic®	Tylenol	

 **Read the labels on all your medications.**

Acetaminophen (Tylenol) is a very common ingredient found in over-the-counter and prescription medications. It's often an ingredient in pain relievers, fever reducers, sleep aids, and cough, cold, and allergy medications. The full name acetaminophen is not always written out, so look for these common abbreviations, especially on prescription pain relievers: APAP, AC, Acetaminoph, Acetaminop, Acetamin, and Acetam.

Acetaminophen is safe when used as directed, but there is a limit to how much you can take in 1 day. It's possible to take too much acetaminophen without knowing because it's in many different medications, so always read and follow the label on the product you are taking. Do not take more than 1 medication at a time that contains acetaminophen without talking with a member of your healthcare team.

If you have any questions or concerns, talk with a member of your healthcare team. You can reach them Monday through Friday from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM at _____ . After 5:00 PM, during the weekend, and on holidays, please call _____ . If there's no number listed, or you're not sure, call 212-639-2000.

Herbal Remedies and Cancer Treatment

One week before you have surgery or start chemotherapy or radiation therapy, you must stop taking any herbal or botanical home remedies or other dietary supplements because they can:

- Interact with your other medications.
- Increase or lower your blood pressure.
- Thin your blood and increase your risk of bleeding.
- Make radiation therapy less effective.
- Lower the effects of medications that weaken the immune system.
- Increase the effects of sedation or anesthesia (medications to make you sleepy).

Common Herbs and Their Effects

Echinacea

- Can cause an allergic reaction, such as a rash or difficulty breathing.
- Can lower the effect of medications used to weaken the immune system.

Garlic

- Can lower your blood pressure, fat, and cholesterol levels.
- Can increase your risk of bleeding.

Ginkgo (also known as *Ginkgo biloba*)

- Can increase your risk of bleeding.

Ginseng

- Can act as a stimulant, which can decrease the effects of anesthesia or

sedation (medications to make you sleepy).

- Can increase your risk of bleeding.
- Can lower your blood glucose (sugar) level.

Turmeric

- Can make chemotherapy less effective.

St. John's Wort

- Can interact with medications given during surgery.
- Can make your skin more sensitive to radiation or laser treatment.

Valerian

- Can increase the effects of anesthesia or sedation (medications to make you sleepy).

Herbal formulas

- Many herbal formulas contain different herbs. We don't know their side effects. You must also stop taking these products 1 week before and during treatment.

For more information about herbs and botanicals, visit the About Herbs, Botanicals & Other Products website at mskcc.org/aboutherbs.

You can also download the Memorial Sloan Kettering About Herbs app from the Apple App Store at itunes.apple.com/us/app/about-herbs/id554267162?mt=8.

This information does not cover all possible side effects. Please share any questions or concerns with your healthcare provider.

If you have any questions or concerns, talk with a member of your healthcare team. You can reach them Monday through Friday from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM at _____. After 5:00 PM, during the weekend, and on holidays, please call _____. If there's no number listed, or you're not sure, call 212-639-2000.

Information for Family and Friends for the Day of Surgery

This information explains what to expect on the day your friend or family member is having surgery in the Surgical Day Hospital at Memorial Sloan Kettering (MSK).

Before the Surgery

After arriving at the hospital, the patient will be asked to provide contact information for the person who will be taking him or her home.

Once the patient is checked in, he or she will go to the Presurgical Center (PSC) to be examined before surgery. One person can come along, but other visitors should wait in the waiting area. If the patient wishes, other visitors may join him or her when the nurse has finished the exam.

When the operating room (OR) is ready, the surgical team will take the patient there. They will prepare the patient for surgery. Then, the surgery will begin.

Please remember the following:

- Do not bring food or drinks into the waiting area or the PSC. Patients are not allowed to eat before their surgery or procedure.
- Our patients are at high risk for infection. Please do not visit if you have any cold or flu symptoms (fever, sneezing, sniffles, or a cough). We may ask you to wear a mask if there are any concerns about your health.
- If the patient brought any valuables, such as a cell phone, iPod, iPad, etc., please keep them safe for him or her during surgery.
- 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. While you are waiting, here are some things you can do:

- Food and drinks are available on the 1st floor in the cafeteria and in the 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. You can also use the computers in the rooms off the main lobby.
- Please be courteous and mindful of others while using your cell phone. Use the designated area to accept and make calls on your cell phone. It may be useful to bring your phone charger to the hospital.
- The Mary French Rockefeller All Faith Chapel is an interfaith chapel located in room M106 near the main lobby on the 1st floor. It is open at all times for meditation and prayer.
- The Patient Recreation Pavilion is open daily from 9:00 AM to 8:00 PM for patients and their visitors. Children are allowed in the pavilion as long as they are supervised by an adult. Arts and crafts, a library, an outdoor terrace, and scheduled entertainment events are available in this area. To get to the pavilion, take the M elevators to the 15th floor.

Surgery updates

A nurse liaison will keep you updated on the progress of surgery. He or she will:

- Ask you for a phone number where you can be reached in you case you want to leave the waiting area.
- Give you information about the patient.
- Prepare you for your meeting with the surgeon.
- Prepare you for visiting the patient in the Post Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU).

After the Surgery

Meeting with the surgeon

When the patient's surgery is completed, the surgeon will speak with you to update you.

Visiting the patient in the PACU

After surgery, the patient will be taken to the PACU. You can use this time to take a walk or just relax in the waiting area until the patient is ready to see you.

When the patient is able to have visitors, a staff member will take you to the PACU. Please remember that only a limited number of visitors can go into the PACU. This is to keep the area quiet and avoid overcrowding. The patients in the PACU need time for rest and nursing care after surgery.

During your visit:

- Silence your cell phone.
- Apply an alcohol-based hand sanitizer (such as Purell®) before entering. There are hand sanitizer stations located throughout the hospital.
- Speak quietly.
- Respect other patients' privacy by staying at the bedside of your friend or family member.
- Do not bring food or flowers into the PACU.
- If any PACU patient needs special nursing attention, we may ask you to leave or to delay your visit.

Preparing for discharge

- The nurse will update you on the patient's condition and will explain the plan of care for the patient.
- The patient will go home the same day and a responsible adult must take him or her home.

The information in this section will tell you what to expect after your surgery, both during your hospital stay and after you leave the hospital. You will learn how to safely recover from your surgery. Write down any questions you have and be sure to ask your doctor or nurse.

What to Expect

When you wake up after your surgery, you will be taken to the Post Anesthesia Recovery Unit (PACU). You will stay there until you are awake and your pain is under control.

You will receive oxygen through a thin tube called a nasal cannula that rests below your nose. A nurse will be monitoring your body temperature, pulse, blood pressure, and oxygen levels.

After your stay in the PACU, you can go home with your caregiver.

Commonly Asked Questions: After You Leave the Hospital

How do I care for my incision?

You and your caregiver should look at your incision daily. Call your doctor if you see any redness or drainage from your incision.

Your incision will be closed with sutures (stitches) under your skin. These sutures dissolve on their own, so they do not need to be removed.

- If you go home with Steri-Strips™ on your incision, they will loosen and fall off by themselves. If they haven't fallen off within 14 days, you may remove them.
- If you go home with glue over your incision, it will also loosen and peel off, similarly to the Steri-Strips.

Is it normal to feel new sensations?

As you are healing, you may feel a several different sensations in your breast. Tenderness, numbness, and twinges are common examples.

These sensations usually come and go, and will lessen over time, usually within the first few months after surgery.

As you continue to heal, you may feel scar tissue along your incision site. It will feel hard. This is common and will soften over the next several months.

Can I shower?

You can shower 24 hours after your surgery. Taking a warm shower is relaxing and can help decrease discomfort. Use soap when you shower and gently wash your incision. Pat the areas dry with a towel after showering, and leave your incision uncovered, unless you have drainage from your incision. If you have drainage, call your doctor's office.

Do not take tub baths, swim, or use hot tubs or saunas until you discuss it with your doctor at the first appointment after your surgery.

Will I have pain when I am home?

The length of time each patient has pain or discomfort varies. You will be given a prescription for pain medication before you leave the hospital. Follow the guidelines below.

- Take your medications as directed and as needed.
- Call your doctor if the medication prescribed for you doesn't relieve your pain.
- Do not drive or drink alcohol while you are taking prescription pain medication.
- As your incision heals, you will have less pain and need less pain medication. A mild pain reliever such as acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil) will relieve aches and discomfort. However, large quantities of acetaminophen may be harmful to your liver. Do not take more acetaminophen than the amount directed on the bottle or as instructed by your doctor or nurse.
- Pain medication should help you as you resume your normal activities. Pain medication is most effective 30 to 45 minutes after taking it.
- Keep track of when you take your pain medication. Taking it when your pain first begins is more effective than waiting for the pain to get worse.

Pain medication may cause constipation (having fewer bowel movements than what is normal for you).

How can I prevent constipation?

- Go to the bathroom at the same time every day. Your body will get used to going at that time.
- If you feel the urge to go, do not put it off. Try to use the bathroom 5 to 15 minutes after meals.
- After breakfast is a good time to move your bowels because the reflexes in your colon are strongest then.
- Exercise if you can; walking is an excellent form of exercise.
- Drink 8 (8-ounce) glasses (2 liters) of liquids daily, if you can. Drink water, juices, soups, ice cream shakes, and other drinks that do not have caffeine. Beverages with caffeine, such as coffee and soda, pull fluid out of the body.
- Slowly increase the fiber in your diet to 25 to 35 grams per day. Fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and cereals contain fiber. If you have an ostomy or have had recent bowel surgery, check with your doctor or nurse before making any changes in your diet.
- Both over-the-counter and prescription medications are available to treat constipation. Start with 1 of the following over-the-counter medications first:
 - Docusate sodium (Colace®) 100 mg. Take ____ capsules ____ times a day. This is a stool softener that causes few side effects. Do not take it with mineral oil.
 - Polyethylene glycol (MiraLAX®) 17 grams daily.
 - Senna (Senokot®) 2 tablets at bedtime. This is a stimulant laxative, which can cause cramping.
- If you haven't had a bowel movement in 2 days, call your doctor or nurse.

Will I be able to eat?

You can resume eating when you go home after surgery. Eating a balanced diet high in protein will help you heal after surgery. Your diet should include a healthy protein source at each meal, as well as fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. If you have questions about your diet, ask to see a dietitian.

When is it safe for me to drive?

You may resume driving after surgery as long as you are not taking prescription pain medication that may make you drowsy, and you have your full range of motion.

How long until I have the pathology results?

The pathology report usually takes to 7 to 10 business days.

When is my first appointment after my surgery?

You will be given a follow-up appointment 1 to 2 weeks after your surgery.

How can I cope with my feelings?

After surgery for a serious illness, you may have new and upsetting feelings. Many people say they felt weepy, sad, worried, nervous, irritable, and angry at one time or another. You may find that you cannot control some of these feelings. If this happens, it's a good idea to seek emotional support.

The first step in coping is to talk about how you feel. Family and friends can help. Your nurse, doctor, and social worker can reassure, support, and guide you. It is always a good idea to let these professionals know how you, your family, and your friends are feeling emotionally. Many resources are available to patients and their families. Whether you are in the hospital or at home, the nurses, doctors, and social workers are here to help you and your family and friends handle the emotional aspects of your illness.

What if I have other questions?

If you have any questions or concerns, please talk with your doctor or nurse. You can reach them Monday through Friday from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM at the numbers listed below.

Doctor _____ Telephone _____

Nurse _____ Telephone _____

After 5:00 PM, during the weekend, and on holidays, please call 212-639-2000 and ask for the doctor on call for your doctor.



Call your doctor or nurse if you have:

- A temperature of 101° F (38.3° C) or higher
- Shortness of breath
- Warmer than normal skin around your incision
- Increased discomfort in the area
- Increased redness around your incision
- New or increased swelling around your incision
- Discharge from your incision

This section includes a list of MSK support services, as well as the resources that were referred to throughout this guide. These resources will help you prepare for your surgery and recover safely. Write down any questions you have and be sure to ask your doctor or nurse.

MSK Resources

Admitting

212-639-5014

Call to discuss private room or luxury suite options. If you want to change your room choice after your PST visit, call 212-639-7873 or 212-639-7874.

Anesthesia

212-639-6840

Call with any questions about anesthesia.

Blood Donor Room

212-639-7643

Call for more information if you are interested in donating blood or platelets.

Bobst International Center

888-675-7722

MSK welcomes patients from around the world. If you are an international patient, call for help coordinating your care.

Chaplaincy Service

212-639-5982

At MSK, our chaplains are available to listen, help support family members, pray, contact community clergy or faith groups, or simply be a comforting companion and a spiritual presence. Anyone can request spiritual support, regardless of formal religious affiliation. The interfaith chapel is located near the main lobby of Memorial Hospital, and is open 24 hours a day. If you have an emergency, please call the hospital operator and ask for the chaplain on call.

Counseling Center

646-888-0200

Many people find counseling helpful. We provide counseling for individuals, couples, families, and groups, as well as medications to help if you feel anxious or depressed.

Integrative Medicine Service

646-888-0800

Offers patients many services to complement traditional medical care, including music therapy, mind/body therapies, dance and movement therapy, yoga, and touch therapy.

Look Good Feel Better Program

800-227-2345

Learn techniques to help you feel better about your appearance by taking a workshop or visiting the program online at www.lookgoodfeelbetter.org.

Patient-to-Patient Support Program

212-639-5007

You may find it comforting to speak with a cancer survivor or caregiver who has been through a similar treatment. Through our Patient-to-Patient Support Program, we are able to offer you a chance to speak with former patients and caregivers.

Patient Financial Services

212-639-8242

Call with any questions regarding preauthorization with your insurance company. This is also called preapproval. Patient Financial Services can also help you with your billing or other insurance questions.

Patient Representative Office

212-639-7202

Call if you have any questions about the Health Care Proxy form or if you have any concerns about your care.

Perioperative Nurse Liaison

212-639-5935

Call if you have any questions about MSK releasing any information while you are having surgery.

Private Duty Nursing Office

212-639-6892

Patients may request private nurses or companions. Call for more information.

Resources for Life After Cancer (RLAC) Program

646-888-8106

At MSK, care doesn't end after active treatment. The RLAC Program is for patients and their families who have finished treatment. This program has many services, including seminars, workshops, support groups, counseling on life after treatment, and help with insurance and employment issues.

Social Work

646-888-5271 or 646-888-5203

Social workers help patients, family, and friends deal with issues that are common for cancer patients. They provide individual counseling and support groups throughout the course of treatment, and can help you communicate with children and other family members. Our social workers can also help referring you to community agencies and programs, as well as financial resources if you're eligible.

Tobacco Treatment Program

212-610-0507

If you want to quit smoking, MSK has specialists who can help. Call for more information.

For additional online information, visit LIBGUIDES on MSK's library website at <http://library.mskcc.org> or the breast cancer section of MSKCC.org. You can also contact the library reference staff at 212-639-7439 for help.

External Resources

Access-A-Ride

www.mta.info/nyct/paratran/guide.htm

877-337-2017

In New York City, the MTA offers a shared ride, door-to-door service for people with disabilities who are unable to take the public bus or subway.

Air Charity Network

www.aircharitynetwork.org

877-621-7177

Provides travel to treatment centers.

American Cancer Society (ACS)

www.cancer.org

800-227-2345

Offers a variety of information and services, including Hope Lodge, a free place for patients and caregivers to stay during cancer treatment.

Cancer and Careers

www.cancerandcareers.org

A comprehensive resource for education, tools, and events for employees with cancer.

CancerCare

www.cancercare.com

800-813-4673

275 Seventh Avenue (between 25th & 26th Streets)

New York, NY 10001

Provides counseling, support groups, educational workshops, publications, and financial assistance.

Cancer Support Community

<http://cancersupportcommunity.org>

Provides support and education to people affected by cancer.

Caregiver Action Network

www.caregiveraction.org

800-896-3650

Provides education and support for those who care for loved ones with a chronic illness or disability.

Chronic Disease Fund

www.cdfund.org

877-968-7233

Offers financial assistance to pay for copayments during treatment. Patients must have medical insurance, meet the income criteria, and be prescribed medication that is part of the CDF formulary.

Corporate Angel Network

www.corpangelnetwork.org

866-328-1313

Free travel to treatment across the country using empty seats on corporate jets.

fertileHOPE

www.fertilehope.org

855-220-7777

Provides reproductive information and support to cancer patients and survivors whose medical treatments have risks associated with infertility.

Gilda's Club

www.gildasclubnyc.org

212-647-9700

A place where men, women, and children living with cancer find social and emotional support through networking, workshops, lectures, and social activities.

Healthwell Foundation

www.healthwellfoundation.org

800-675-8416

Provides financial assistance to cover copayments, health care premiums, and deductibles for certain medications and therapies.

Hospital Hosts

www.hospitalhosts.com

National resource to help reduce costs related to medical travel needs such as air, car, and lodging near hospitals.

Joe's House

www.joeshouse.org

877-563-7468

Provides a list of places to stay near treatment centers for people with cancer and their families.

LGBT Cancer Project

<http://lgbtcancer.com>

Provides support and advocacy for the LGBT community, including an online support groups and a database of LGBT friendly clinical trials.

National Cancer Institute

www.cancer.gov

National Cancer Legal Services Network

www.nclsn.org

Free cancer legal advocacy program.

National LGBT Cancer Network

www.cancer-network.org

Provides education, training, and advocacy for LGBT cancer survivors and those at risk.

Needy Meds

www.needymeds.com

Lists Patient Assistance Programs for brand and generic name medications.

NyRx

www.nyrxplan.com

Provides prescription benefits to eligible employees and retirees of public sector employers in New York State.

Partnership for Prescription Assistance

www.pparx.org

888-477-2669

Helps qualifying patients without prescription drug coverage get free or low-cost medications.

Patient Access Network Foundation

www.panfoundation.org

866-316-7263

Provides assistance with copayments for patients with insurance.

Patient Advocate Foundation

www.patientadvocate.org

800-532-5274

Provides access to care, financial assistance, insurance assistance, job retention assistance, and access to the national underinsured resource directory.

RxHope

www.rxhope.com

877-267-0517

Provides assistance to help people obtain medications that they have trouble affording.

SHARE

www.sharecancersupport.org

866-891-2392

Offers support groups for survivors of breast, metastatic breast, and ovarian cancer in Manhattan, Queens, Brooklyn, and Staten Island.