About Your Retroperitoneal Lymph Node Dissection

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This guide will help you prepare for your retroperitoneal lymph node dissection (RPLND) at Memorial Sloan Kettering (MSK), and help you understand what to expect after your surgery. Refer to this guide throughout your care at MSK, including before and after your surgery.

RPLND is a surgery that removes the lymph nodes that are located behind the organs in your abdomen. RPLND is a treatment for testicular cancer, because the retroperitoneal lymph nodes are usually the first place to which testicular cancer spreads. These lymph nodes may also be affected by other types of cancer.

**About the retroperitoneal lymph nodes**

Retroperitoneal lymph nodes are found in the area between the kidneys along a vein, the vena cava, and an artery, the aorta. The vena cava carries blood to the heart and the aorta carries blood from the heart to the rest of the body. The retroperitoneal lymph nodes are shaded in black in Your Retroperitoneal Lymph Nodes, below.

During your surgery, your surgeon will make an incision from the bottom of your ribcage to your pubic area. He or she will remove your lymph nodes through this incision. Your surgery will take 3 ½ to 5 hours.
**Sperm banking**

This surgery may affect the nerves that control the way semen exits your body. Semen may go into your bladder instead of out of your penis. This is called retrograde ejaculation and can impact your fertility. For more information, please read *Retrograde Ejaculation*, located in the “After Your Surgery” section of this guide.

Your surgeon will try to use nerve sparing techniques if possible. This can prevent retrograde ejaculation. However, it can still take between one month and several years before your nerves recover. We strongly recommend that you bank your sperm before your surgery. Your doctor and nurse will talk to you about this in more detail.
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 medications to help prevent them.

• If you drink alcohol regularly, you may be at risk for other complications during and after your 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 aspirin, heparin, warfarin (Coumadin®), clopidogrel (Plavix®), and tinzaparin (Innohep®). There are others, so be sure your doctor knows all the medications you’re taking.

• I take prescription medications, including patches and creams.

• 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 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 want to quit, call our Tobacco Treatment Program at 212-610-0507. You can also ask your nurse about the program.
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 may 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 will 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, or carotid doppler study
- The name(s) and telephone number(s) of your doctor(s)

Health Care Proxy

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. This person is known as 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.

Breathing and Coughing Exercises

Practice taking deep breaths and coughing before your surgery. You will be given an incentive spirometer to help expand your lungs. For more information, please read How to Use Your Incentive Spirometer, located in the “After Your Surgery” section of this guide. If you have any questions, ask your nurse or respiratory therapist.
Exercise
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

Review Your 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.

If you are taking any blood thinner medications by mouth (such as aspirin, heparin, warfarin, clopidogrel, tinzaparin or others), or by injection [such as enoxaparin sodium (Lovenox®)], talk with your cardiologist about when it is safe for you to stop taking these medications before your surgery.

Purchase Supplies
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

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

2 Days Before Your Surgery

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.
Day Before Your Surgery

Start Bowel Preparation

The day before your surgery you will eat and drink mostly clear liquids. Your doctor may instruct you to eat certain other foods as well. In the table below are some general instructions. Use the blank spaces to write in any additional examples as you speak with your doctor or nurse. Do not eat or drink anything after midnight the night before your surgery.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food/Beverage</th>
<th>Eat/Drink</th>
<th>Do Not Eat/Drink</th>
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| Soups         | • Clear broth or bouillon  
                • Clear consommé  
                • Packaged vegetable, chicken, or beef broth | Any products with any particles of dried food or seasoning |
| Sweets        | • Gelatin, such as Jello®  
                • Flavored ices  
                • Hard candies, such as Lifesavers® | All others |
| Beverages     | • Clear fruit juices, such as white cranberry, white grape, apple  
                • Soda, such as 7-Up®, Sprite®, ginger ale, seltzer, Gatorade®  
                • Black coffee  
                • Tea | • Juices with pulp  
                • Nectars  
                • Alcoholic beverages |
| Other         |           |                   |

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: ____________

On the day of your surgery, go to the main hospital at 1275 York Avenue between East 67th and East 68th Streets. Take the B elevator to the 6th Floor to the Presurgical Center (PSC).
Night before your surgery

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

If your doctor or nurse practitioner instructed you to take certain medications the morning of your surgery, take only those medications with a small 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.

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<th>Medication</th>
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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 hearing aids, dentures, prosthetic device(s), wig, and religious articles (such as a rosary).

• Wear something comfortable and loose-fitting.

• If you wear contact lenses, wear your glasses instead.


What to bring

☐ Sneakers that lace up. You may have some swelling in your feet. Lace-up sneakers can accommodate this swelling.

☐ A CD player and CDs or an iPod, if you choose. However, someone will need to hold these items for you when you go into surgery.

☐ Your incentive spirometer, if you have one.

☐ 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.

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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. Patients with the same or similar names may be having surgery on the same day.

Meet With Your Nurse

A 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.

Get Dressed for Surgery

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

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 will 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.

Once you are fully asleep, a breathing tube will be placed through your mouth and into your windpipe to help you breathe. You will also have a urinary catheter placed to drain urine from your bladder.

Once your surgery is finished, your incisions will be closed with stitches that will absorb as you are healing. Steri-Strips™ (thin pieces of tape) will be placed directly on your incision(s) and covered with a bandage. Your breathing tube is usually taken out while you are still in the operating room.
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®
- Anacin®
- Arthritis Pain Formula
- Arthritis Foundation Pain Reliever®
- ASA Enseals®
- ASA Suppositories®
- Ascriptin® and Ascriptin A/D
- Aspergum®
- Asprinox®
- Axotal®
- Azdone®
- Bayer® (most formulations)
- BC® Powder and Cold Formulations
- Bufferin® (most formulations)
- Buffets II®
- Buffex®
- Cama® Arthritis Pain Reliever
- COPE®
- Dasin®
- Easprin®
- Ectrin (most formulations)
- Empirin® Aspirin (most formulations)
- Epromate®
- Equagesic Tablets
- Equazine®
- Excedrin® Extra-Strength Analgesic Tablets and Caplets
- Excedrin Migraine
- Fiorgen®
- Fiorinal® (most formulations)
- Fiortal®
- Gelpirin®
- Genprin®
- Gensan®
- Heartline®
- Headrin®
- Isolly®
- Lanorinal®
- Lortab® ASA Tablets
- Magnaprin®
- Marnal®
- Micrumin®
- Momentum®
- Norgesic Forte® (most formulations)
- Norwich® Aspirin
- PAC® Analgesic Tablets
- Orphengesic®
- Painaid®
- Panasal®
- Percodan® Tablets
- Persistin®
- Robaxical® Tablets
- Roxiprin®
- Saletes®
- Salocol®
- Sodol®
- Soma® Compound Tablets
- Soma Compound with Codeine Tablets
- St. Joseph® Adult Chewable Aspirin
- Supac®
- Synalgos® DC Capsules
- Tenol-Plus®
- Trigesic®
- Talwin® Compound
- Vanquish® Analgesic Caplets
- Wesprin® Buffered
- Zee-Seltzer®
- ZORprin®

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

- Advil®
- Advil Migraine
- Aleve®
- Anaprox DS®
- Ansaid®
- Arthrotec®
- Bayer Select Pain Relief Formula Caplets
- Celebrex
- Children’s Motrin®
- Clinoril®
- Daypro®
- diclofenac
- Etodolac®
- Feldene®
- Fenoprofen
- Genprie®
- Ibuprofen
- Indometacin
- Indocin®
- Ketoprofen
- Ketorolac
- Lodine®
- Meclofenamate
- Mefenamic Acid
- Menadione
- Mobic®
- Motrin
- Nabumetone
- Nalfon®
- Naproxen
- Napsyn®
- Nuprin®
- Orudis®
- Oxaprozin
- Piroxicam
- Ponstel®
- Relafen®
- Saleto 200
- Sulindac
- Toradol®
- Voltaren®
- 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 E-400 IU E complex-600
- Aquavit E-1000 IU Softgels Vita-Plus E
- Aquasol E D’alpha 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®
- Aceta® with Codeine
- Acetaminophen with Codeine
- Aspirin-Free Anacin
- Arthritis Pain Formula
- Aspirin-Free
- Darvocet-N 100®
- Datril®
- Di-Gesic®
- Esig®
- Excedrin P.M.
- Fiorcet®
- Lorcet®
- Lortab®
- Naldegesic®
- Norco®
- Panadol®
- Percocet®
- Repan
- Roxicet®
- Talacen®
- Tempra®
- Tylenol
- TYLENOL with Codeine No. 3
- Vanquish
- Vicodin®
- Wygesic®
- Zydone®
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.

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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 other drugs
- Increase or lower blood pressure
- Thin the blood and increase the risk of bleeding
- Make radiation therapy less effective
- Lower the effects of medications that suppress the immune system
- Increase the effects of sedation or anesthesia

**Common Herbs and Their Effects**

**Echinacea**
- Can cause an allergic reaction such as a rash or difficulty breathing
- Can lower the effect of drugs used to suppress the immune system

**Garlic**
- Can lower blood pressure, fat, and cholesterol levels
- Can prevent platelets (the blood cells that help stop bleeding) from sticking together, which increases the risk of bleeding

**Gingko (also known as gingko biloba)**
- Can change how platelets function, which can increase the risk of bleeding

**Ginseng**
- Can act as a stimulant, which can decrease the effects of anesthesia or sedation
- Can interfere with platelet function, which can increase the risk of bleeding
- Can lower blood glucose (sugar) level

**Turmeric**
- Can reduce the antitumor action of chemotherapy drugs

**St. John's Wort**
- Can interact with medications given during surgery
- Can make the skin more sensitive to laser treatment

**Valerian**
- Can have a sedative effect, which can increase the effects of anesthesia or sedation
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 doctor or nurse.

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.

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**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 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 meeting with the surgeon after the surgery. This is the same person who will get updates from the nurse liaison during the surgery. If the patient is having an outpatient procedure, he or she will also be asked to provide contact information for the person who will be taking them 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, which can take 15 to 90 minutes. 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, snifflies, 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.
- The coat-check room is located at the bottom of the escalator on the ground level. It is open Monday through Friday from 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM.
- 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:

- 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).

To contact the nurse liaison:

- From inside the hospital, use a hospital courtesy phone. Dial 2000 and ask for beeper 9000. Please be patient; this can take up to 2 minutes.
- You can also ask the information desk staff to contact the nurse liaison for you.

**After the Surgery**

**Meeting with the surgeon**
When the patient's surgery is completed, we will call you and ask you to return to the concierge desk to tell you where to go to meet with the surgeon.

After you have met with the surgeon, return to the concierge desk and tell them that you have finished your consultation.

**Visiting the patient in the PACU**
After surgery, the patient will be taken to the PACU. It can take up to 90 minutes before the patient is ready to have visitors. 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.

**While visiting in the PACU**

- 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.

After your visit, the nurse will escort you back from the PACU. He or she will update you on the patient's condition. He or she will also explain the plan of care for the patient, such as whether the patient is staying overnight and when he or she will be moved to an inpatient room. If the patient is going home the same day, a responsible adult must take him or her home.

We will give you a card with the PACU phone number. Please appoint one person to call for updates.

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.
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 in the Post Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU).

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

You will have a urinary catheter (Foley®) in your bladder to monitor the amount of urine you are making. You will also have compression boots on your lower legs to help your circulation.

You may have a pain pump called a patient-controlled analgesia (PCA) device. For more information, please read Patient-Controlled Analgesia (PCA), located in this section. Your pain medication and fluids will be given through an IV line.

You will have staples along your incision.

Your visitors can see you briefly in the PACU, usually within 90 minutes after you arrive there. A member of the nursing staff will explain the guidelines to them.

You will stay in the PACU for 2 to 4 hours. After your stay in the PACU, you will be taken to your hospital room. Your nurse will tell you how to recover from your surgery. Below are examples of ways you can help yourself recover safely.

- You will be encouraged to walk with the help of your nurse or physical therapist. We will give you medication to relieve pain. Walking helps reduce the risk for blood clots and pneumonia. It also helps to stimulate your bowels so they begin working again.

- You will not be allowed to eat for the first day or two. Then, you will be given clear liquids. After that, your diet will progress to a regular diet as tolerated. As soon as you are eating, moving your bowels, and showing no signs of complications, you will be ready to go home.

- Use your incentive spirometer. This will help your lungs expand, which prevents pneumonia. For more information, please read How to Use Your Incentive Spirometer, located in this section.

- Continue to perform your breathing and coughing exercises every 1 to 2 hours while you are awake. Your nurse will teach you to splint your incision. This will reduce the movement of your stomach muscles and decrease pain while you do the coughing exercises.
The following section covers common questions patients ask after having a retroperitoneal lymph node dissection. Speak with your doctor or nurse if you have any additional questions or if any of this information is unclear.

**Will I have pain after my surgery?**
You will have some pain after your surgery. Your doctor and nurse will ask you about your pain often. You will be given medication to manage your pain as needed. If your pain is not relieved, please tell your doctor or nurse. It is important to control your pain so you can cough, breathe deeply, use your incentive spirometer, and get out of bed and walk.

**Why is it important to walk?**
Walking will help prevent blood clots in your legs. It also decreases your risk of having other complications such as pneumonia.

**Will I be able to eat?**
You will not be able to eat anything for 3 to 4 days after your surgery. After that, you can begin taking sips of water and then start on a clear liquids diet. You will then progress to a minimal fat diet, usually on the day before you are discharged. This diet will limit your intake of fat to 5 grams a day. Your nurse will give you the *Minimal Fat Diet* booklet to help you follow this diet.

You will not be allowed to eat nuts, corn, or popcorn for 1 year after surgery, because these foods are often difficult to digest.

You will also need to avoid all laxatives.

If you have questions about your diet, ask to see a dietitian.

**How long will I be in the hospital?**
Most patients are in the hospital for 7 to 10 days after this surgery.
**Will I have pain when I am home?**

The length of time each patient has pain or discomfort varies. You may still have some incisional pain when you go home and will probably be taking pain medication. Follow the guidelines below.

- Call your doctor if the medication prescribed for you doesn’t relieve your pain.
- Take your medications as directed and as needed.
- Do not drive or drink alcohol while you are taking prescription pain medication.
- As your incisions heal, 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. Take enough medication to do your exercises comfortably. 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.

**Can I shower?**

Yes, taking a warm shower is relaxing and can help decrease muscle aches. Use soap when you shower and gently wash all of your incisions. Pat the areas dry with a towel after showering, and leave your incision uncovered (unless there is drainage). Call your doctor if you see any redness or drainage from your incision.

Do not take tub baths until you discuss it with your doctor at the first appointment after your surgery.

**How can I prevent constipation?**

Your usual bowel pattern will change after surgery. You may have trouble passing stool (feces). This is a common side effect of pain medication. Please review the material your nurse gave you about fiber and constipation.

To avoid constipation, take a stool softener such as docusate sodium (Colace®) 3 times a day. Continue taking it until you are no longer taking pain medication. Drink plenty of liquids and eat more foods with fiber such as fruits and vegetables. If you feel bloated, avoid foods that can cause gas, such as beans, broccoli, onions, cabbage, and cauliflower. Do not take any over-the-counter laxatives. Please contact your doctor’s office if you are experiencing constipation.

**Can I drink alcohol after surgery?**

Do not drink alcohol while you are taking pain medications.
How do I care for my incisions?

It is normal to have numbness of the skin below your incision because some of the nerves were cut; this sensation will lessen over time. Some people experience swelling in both of their lower legs following surgery. This will also get better with time.

- By the time you are ready to leave the hospital, your staples will have been removed and replaced with small strips of tape called Steri-Strips. Your nurse will show you how to clean your incision at home.
- You and your caregiver should look at your incision with your nurse before you leave the hospital so you know what it looks like.
- If any liquid is draining from your incision, write down the amount and color.

Your Steri-Strips will loosen and fall off by themselves. If they haven’t fallen off within 10 days, you may remove them.

Is it normal to feel tired after surgery?

Feeling tired (fatigue) is an expected side effect. You may need a nap during the day, but try to stay out of bed as much as possible. That will help you sleep at night. It usually takes 6 to 8 weeks until your energy level returns to normal.

Can I resume my activities?

It is important for you to resume your activities after surgery. Spread them out over the course of the day. You can do light household tasks. Try dusting, washing dishes, preparing light meals, and other activities as you are able.

You may return to your usual sexual activity as soon as your incisions are well healed and you can do so without pain or fatigue.

Your body is an excellent guide for telling you when you have done too much. When you increase your activity, monitor your body’s reaction. You may find that you have more energy in the morning or the afternoon. Plan your activities for times of the day when you have more energy.

When is it safe for me to drive?

You can drive one month after your surgery.

When can I return to work?

The time it takes to return to work depends on the type of work you do, the type of surgery you had, and how fast your body heals. Usually you can return to work 3 to 6 weeks after surgery. However, if your job requires heavy lifting or physical labor, it may be 3 months before you can return to work.
What exercises can I do?
Exercise will help you gain strength and feel better. Walking and stair climbing are excellent forms of exercise. Gradually increase the distance you walk. Climb stairs slowly, resting or stopping as needed. Ask your doctor or nurse before starting more strenuous exercises.

When can I lift heavy objects?
Check with your doctor before you do any heavy lifting. Normally, you should not lift anything heavier than 5 pounds for at least 6 weeks. Ask your doctor how long you should avoid heavy lifting.

How can I cope with my feelings?
After surgery for a serious illness, you may have new and upsetting feelings. Many patients 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.

When is my first appointment after my surgery?
Your first appointment after surgery will be 3 to 4 weeks after your surgery. Your nurse will give you instructions on how to make this appointment, including the phone number to call.

During this appointment, your doctor will discuss the pathology results with you in detail.

Call your doctor if you have:

- A temperature of 101°F (38.3°C) or higher
- Pain that does not get better with your medications
- Redness, swelling, or drainage from your incisions that is foul smelling or pus-like
- Diarrhea or constipation
- Nausea or vomiting
- Any new symptom or physical change
- Any questions or concerns

After 5:00 PM, during the weekend, and on holidays, call 212-639-2000. Ask to speak to the doctor on call.
How to Use Your Incentive Spirometer

This information will help you learn how to use your incentive spirometer.

An incentive spirometer will help you expand your lungs by encouraging you to breathe more deeply and fully. Using your incentive spirometer after your surgery, along with deep breathing and coughing exercises, will help keep your lungs active throughout the recovery process and prevent complications such as pneumonia.

A video demonstrating how to use your incentive spirometer can be found on the Memorial Sloan Kettering (MSK) website at:

www.mskcc.org/videos/how-use-your-incentive-spirometer

The first time you use it, you will need to take the flexible tubing with the mouthpiece out of the bag. Expand the tubing and connect it to the outlet on the right side of the base (see figure). The mouthpiece will be attached to the other end of the tubing.

To use your incentive spirometer:

1. Sit upright in a chair or in bed. Hold the incentive spirometer upright at eye level.
2. Exhale (breathe out) once slowly. Put the mouthpiece in your mouth and close your lips tightly around it.
3. Take a slow, deep breath in through your mouth. As you take a slow, deep breath, you will see the piston rise inside the large column. While the piston rises, the indicator on the right should move upwards. It should stay in between the 2 arrows (see figure). If the indicator does not stay between the arrows, you are breathing either too fast or too slowly.
4. Try to get the piston as high as you can, while keeping the indicator between the arrows.
5. When you get it as high as you can, try to keep it at that level for 2 to 5 seconds or longer, if possible.
6. Exhale slowly, allowing the piston to fall all the way back to the bottom. Rest for a few seconds.
7. Take 10 breaths with your incentive spirometer every hour while you are awake, or as instructed by your clinician. Try to get the piston to the same level with each breath.
8. After each set of breaths, cough 3 times. This will help loosen or clear any secretions in your lungs.
**Special Points**

- If you feel dizzy at any time, stop and rest. Try again at a later time.
- If you had surgery on your chest or abdomen, hug or hold a pillow to help splint your incision. This will help decrease pain at your incision.
- Breathe through your mouth. If you breathe through your nose the incentive spirometer will not work properly. You can plug your nose if you have trouble.
- Keep the incentive spirometer clean by covering the mouthpiece when it is not in use.

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.
Patient-Controlled Analgesia (PCA)

This information will help you understand what patient-controlled analgesia (PCA) is and how to use your PCA pump.

Patient-controlled analgesia (PCA) helps you control your pain by administering your pain medication. PCA uses a computerized pump to deliver pain medication into a vein (intravenous, or IV) or epidural space (in your spine). Whether you have an IV PCA or epidural PCA depends on what you and your doctor decided was right for you. When you have pain, you simply press the button attached to the pump. The pump will deliver a safe dose that your doctor has prescribed. Only you should push the PCA button. **Family and friends should never push the button.**

**How Medication is Given with PCA**

The pump can be programmed to deliver your medication in 2 ways:

- **As needed** - You get your pain medication only when you press the button. It will not allow you to get more medication than prescribed. The pump is set to allow only a certain number of doses per hour.
- **Continuous** - You get your pain medication at a constant rate all the time. This can be combined with the as needed mode. That allows you to take extra doses safely if you are having pain.

**Possible Side Effects**

Pain medication delivered by the PCA pump can have side effects. Tell your doctor or nurse if you have any of these or any other problems:

- Constipation
- Nausea, vomiting
- Dry mouth
- Itching
- Changes in your vision, such as seeing things that are not there
- Drowsiness, dizziness, or confusion
- Weakness, numbness, or tingling in your arms or legs
- Difficulty urinating
Special Instructions

PCA is not right for everyone.

- People who are confused or cannot follow these instructions should not use PCA.
- If you have been told you have sleep apnea, tell your doctor. This may affect the way we prescribe your PCA.
- If you have weakness in your hands and may have trouble pushing the PCA button, talk with your doctor or nurse.

When using PCA, tell your doctor or nurse if:

- The medication is not controlling your pain.
- You are having side effects.
- Your pain changes, such as if:
  - It gets worse
  - You feel it in a new place
  - Feels different than before

Your doctor may be able to change the medication to one that may work better for you or give you fewer side effects.

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.

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**Retrograde Ejaculation**

This information will help you understand retrograde ejaculation and how it may affect you.

Retrograde ejaculation occurs when semen flows back into your bladder, instead of out through your penis. Usually, sperm leave the testicles and travel up the vas deferens (see figure). When the sperm reach the ejaculatory duct, they mix with semen from the seminal vesicles and the prostate. During orgasm, the bladder neck closes. This prevents semen from flowing back and entering the bladder. The semen exits the body through the penis.

If you have retrograde ejaculation, the bladder neck does not close at orgasm. Semen then flows backward into the bladder rather than forward through the penis.

![Diagram of male reproductive organs](image)

- **Causes of Retrograde Ejaculation**

  You may develop retrograde ejaculation after surgery to remove the lymph nodes behind your abdomen, as a treatment for testicular cancer. During the surgery, the nerves that control the bladder neck may have been injured. Sometimes, these nerves can be spared. However, it can take a month to several years for them to begin to work again. Your doctor can tell you if nerve-sparing surgery is a possible option for you.

- **Sexuality**

  Retrograde ejaculation is not harmful or painful, but it may cause a subtle change in sensation, because no semen exits the penis. A dry ejaculate does not affect erection or orgasm. You will still be able to enjoy sexual activity. After sexual activity, your urine may appear cloudy because it has semen in it.

- **Fertility**

  If you plan to have a family after your surgery, tell your doctor you want to bank your sperm before surgery. If you have not banked your sperm before the surgery, and want to have a family, your doctor can tell you about your options and refer you to a specialist.
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.
This section contains 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.
The following are MSK resources that you may find helpful.

**Admitting**
212-639-5014
Call the Admitting office to discuss private room or luxury suite options. If you want to change your room choice after your Presurgical Testing visit, call 212-639-7873 or 212-639-7874.

**Anesthesia**
212-639-6840
Call with questions about anesthesia, the medications used to make you sleepy for your surgery.

**Blood Donor Room**
212-639-7643
If you are interested in donating blood or platelets, call for more information.

**Bobst International Center**
888-675-7722
MSK welcomes patients from around the world. If you are an international patient, call the International Center for help coordinating your care.

**Chaplaincy Service**
212-639-5982
Spiritual and religious resources provide comfort and strength for many patients. The chaplains at MSK are available to help you access those resources. They can provide spiritual support for anyone. If you have a specific religious need, please call the number above. The interfaith chapel is located near the main lobby of 1275 York Avenue. It is open 24 hours a day. If there is an emergency, please call the hospital operator and ask for the chaplain on call.

**Counseling Services**
646-888-0100
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 (outpatient)
646-888-0888 (inpatient)
Integrative Medicine Service offers patients many services to complement traditional medical care, including music therapy, mind/body therapies, dance and movement therapy, yoga, and touch therapy.

**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 Patient Financial Services 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.

646-497-9176  
Call the number above for general information about your insurance coverage. Remember, you must call your insurance company for preauthorization.

Patient Representatives  
212-639-7202  
Call the Patient Representatives office if you have any questions about the Health Care Proxy Form or if you have any concerns about your care.

Perioperative Clinical Nurse Specialist  
212-639-5935  
If you have any questions about MSK releasing any information while you are having surgery, call the clinical nurse specialist.

Private Nursing Options  
212-639-6892  
Patients may request private nurses or companions. For more information, call the Private Duty Nursing Office.

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  
212-639-7020  
Social workers help patients, family, and friends deal with issues that are common for cancer patients. They provide counseling on getting used to a serious illness, advice on how to communicate with family, friends, and young children, and help with employment issues.

Tobacco Treatment Program  
212-610-0507  
If you want to quit smoking, MSK has specialists who can help. Call for more information.

Important Telephone Numbers
The following are resources outside of MSK that you may find helpful:

**American Cancer Society**
www.cancer.org

**National Cancer Institute**
www.cancer.gov

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