

# What do I need to know before surgery?

## PATIENTS

If you have trouble finding the answers to any of the questions below, refer to the **What to Ask Your Doctor Before Surgery** guide. Be sure to include those questions in your discussion.

Another resource for useful information about hospitals can be found here: [medicare.gov/hospitalcompare](https://www.medicare.gov/hospitalcompare).



### Your surgery and surgeon

Do you understand your surgery—what is being done and why?  
Are you comfortable with the surgeon's experience and reputation?

### Hospital or surgery center safety

How much do you know about the quality of the hospital or surgery center? You can see Medicare ratings for hospitals online at [medicare.gov/hospitalcompare](https://www.medicare.gov/hospitalcompare).  
Does the hospital or surgery center have a written safety policy? Does it follow general health and safety measures to protect its patients?  
What is the policy on visiting hours and guests at the hospital or surgery center?

### Paperwork

Do you understand all of the required paperwork?  
Have you made copies of each document for your records?  
Do you know what forms of identification you will need to bring to the hospital or surgery center?



### Current health issues and medications

Have you talked with your surgeon about all of your current health issues?  
Did you provide the surgeon with a list of all prescription and over-the-counter medications, vitamins, and herbal supplements you take? Which medications will you need to bring with you if you will be staying overnight?

### Anesthesia/sedation

Who will administer your anesthesia? What are his or her credentials?  
Did you tell the surgeon about any allergic reactions you have had to any medications or anesthesia?  
Have you described to your surgeon any pain that you are feeling?



### Recovery plan

Will your surgeon prescribe pain medication to take once you are sent home?  
Will you need to see your surgeon or primary care doctor for any follow-up?  
When can you restart your regular medications after surgery?  
Have you asked the surgeon about any common health problems that are possible after this type of surgery?

### Life after surgery

Will rehabilitation be needed? Will you need to travel to a rehabilitation center?  
When will you be able to return to work?  
Do you have a plan in place for who can help your family while you recover?  
Will you have an exercise routine to do after surgery?  
Have you asked your surgeon what to expect during recovery?  
Have you asked when you can return to your daily activities?

# What do caregivers need to know before surgery?

## CAREGIVERS

If you have trouble finding the answers to any of the questions below, refer to the **What to Ask Your Doctor Before Surgery** guide. Be sure to include those questions in your discussion.

Another resource for useful information about hospitals can be found here: [medicare.gov/hospitalcompare](http://medicare.gov/hospitalcompare).



### The surgery and surgeon

Do you understand the surgery—what is being done and why?  
Are you comfortable with the surgeon's experience and reputation?

### Hospital or surgery center safety

How much do you know about the quality of the hospital or surgery center? You can see Medicare ratings for hospitals online at [medicare.gov/hospitalcompare](http://medicare.gov/hospitalcompare).  
What is the policy on visiting hours and guests at the hospital or surgery center?  
Is transportation for the patient arranged to and from the hospital or surgery center?

### Paperwork

Do you have copies of the forms that were completed before the surgery?  
Are you prepared to help the patient complete required forms on the day of the surgery?



### Current health issues and medications

Do you have a list of the prescription and over-the-counter medications, vitamins, and herbal supplements the patient takes?  
Have you discussed these medications with the nurse or surgeon prior to the surgery?

### Anesthesia/sedation

Who will administer the anesthesia? What are his or her credentials?  
Did you tell the surgeon about any allergic reactions the patient has had to any medications or anesthesia?



### Recovery plan

Will the surgeon prescribe pain medication for the patient to use once sent home?  
Are you prepared to help the patient take the medication as needed?  
Have you asked the surgeon about any common health problems that are possible after this type of surgery?  
Do you know whom to contact if the patient has any health problems after the surgery?

### Life after surgery

Have you discussed how to take care of the patient after surgery? Have you discussed rehabilitation if the patient needs it?  
Will you be available to help the patient return to daily activities over time?