

Talking to your surgeon before surgery

Clear communication between you and your surgeon will help you understand what to expect before, during, and after surgery. Be sure to share any questions or concerns you have with your surgeon. Here are some example questions you may want to ask.

Why do I need this surgery?

Why you should ask it: It is important to understand the recommended surgery and why it is needed. Your surgeon should explain clearly the surgery and steps involved.

How many times has the surgeon performed the procedure? What are his or her credentials?

Why you should ask it: Before having surgery, ensure that your surgeon is experienced in it. This information may help you feel more confident about the surgery.

Whom in my surgeon's office do I contact if I have questions before or after my surgery?

Why you should ask it: You may think of more questions before and after surgery. Ask your surgeon for a list of people to contact if you do.

What are the risks and possible complications of the surgery?

Why you should ask it: *Complications* are health issues that can result from surgery. Examples are infection or bleeding. All surgeries carry some risks. It is important to discuss these risks with your surgeon before your surgery. By being aware of possible complications, you may be able to detect warning signs and seek medical attention earlier.

Notes: _____

Talking to your surgeon before surgery (continued)

How can I prepare myself mentally and physically for surgery?

Why you should ask it: Help reduce stress by talking with your surgeon about what to expect during and after your surgery. Your surgeon should talk about the steps leading up to surgery. These may include tests. They may also include special instructions, such as when to stop eating and drinking before surgery or which medications you can take on surgery day.

You can prepare physically too. Ask your surgeon about any exercises or changes to your diet needed before surgery. If you will have physical therapy after surgery, you can learn and practice the exercises before your surgery day. Discuss your smoking history with your surgeon too.

How long will my surgery last? How long will I be in the hospital?

Why you should ask it: Your surgeon will know what your surgery involves, about how long it will take, and how long you will need to stay in the hospital. Discussing these questions will help you prepare for the surgery. It will also help you plan for what is required during your hospital stay, such as what items to bring.

What is the recovery time for this surgery? What will my recovery look like?

Why you should ask it: It is important for you to know how long it will take to recover. This will help you prepare in case you need a caregiver after surgery. You can also plan for someone to help with daily tasks or to call your workplace to tell them how long you will be away from work.

Notes: _____
