

Surgery: What to Expect

Step 2: Preparing for Surgery

Preparing for surgery is one of the most important ways you can contribute to your recovery. By following a few basic health suggestions, you can improve your outcome and reduce the risk of surgical complications.



IMPORTANT - GETTING TO AND FROM SURGERY

For your safety, you must have a ride home from the hospital. A taxi or bus is not acceptable unless you will be accompanied by a responsible adult. Your surgery may be cancelled at the last minute if you have not made these travel plans.



STOP SMOKING: If you smoke up to the time of your surgery, you will have a higher risk of lung problems (such as pneumonia) and your surgical wound may not heal as well. Quit smoking before your surgery to reduce these risks. The UVM Medical Center offers smoking cessation classes to help you quit smoking. You can also work with your primary care provider or contact a Tobacco Treatment Specialist at (802) 847-6541. Another resource is the Vermont QUIT network at 1-800-784-8669.



NUTRITION: It is important to eat healthy foods before surgery. Tell your doctor if you have trouble eating, have not been very hungry, or have lost weight without trying. Supplements such as Ensure, Boost, and others are a good way to improve your nutritional status before a surgical procedure. If you have diabetes, liver, or kidney disease, you may need to avoid certain supplements. Ask your doctor which supplement is best for you.



EXERCISE: Do not reduce your activity levels before surgery. It is important that you remain as active as possible. Consider adding a walking program prior to surgery.



BLOOD SUGAR CONTROL: If you have problems with blood sugar due to diabetes, work with your primary care provider to control your blood sugar as well as you can before your surgery. This will improve the healing process and reduce the rate of infections and other complications.



MEDICATIONS: Your surgeon will tell you whether you need to stop or change any medications. If you have questions about medications, be sure to ask in advance.



SKIN PREPARATION: Follow your surgeon's directions for skin washing and preparation before your surgery.



FASTING: In some cases, you may need to fast (not eat for a period of time) before your surgery. Your doctor's office will tell you if you need to fast before your surgery.

