



Preparing for your surgery

[ssmhealth.com/SurgeryGuide](https://www.ssmhealth.com/SurgeryGuide)

Welcome to surgical services



The information outlined in this booklet is designed to help you and your family prepare for your surgery. Knowing what to expect and making necessary preparations can help ensure that your surgery goes smoothly. Patient safety and an exceptional patient experience are our priorities, and we will do our very best to make sure you are both safe and comfortable.

Your surgery information

Procedure Date: _____

Procedure Time: _____

Location: _____

You may be called to confirm or change the time that you need to arrive at the hospital.

Preparing for surgery



Pre-admission testing process

There are two types of pre-admission testing (PAT):

1. Pre-operative phone interview

- A nurse will call you for your pre-operative telephone interview no later than the day prior to surgery.
- The phone interview will take approximately 10-20 minutes to complete.
- If you are unavailable, the nurse will leave a message with a phone number for you to call. During the call, the nurse will review your instructions for the day of your surgery. Please feel free to ask any questions you might have.

2. Pre-admission testing visit

- Bring identification and insurance cards.
- Bring a list of all your medications including over-the-counter medications with dosages and times and any prescriptions you have been given.
- Bring a list of any allergies to medicines, food, latex, or other sources.
- If you have an advance directive, living will, or durable power of attorney, please bring a copy with you.
- A nurse will take your health history and provide you with information about your surgery.
- You may be seen by an anesthesiologist.

The immune system protects your body from bad germs.

When you get sick, it helps you heal.



- Blood work, a urinalysis, an EKG and/or a chest X-ray may be performed. In addition, a nasal swab may be performed to assess for infection.
- This appointment can take up to two hours.
- We encourage you to have breakfast or other regular meals prior to arriving for pre-admission testing. Fasting is not required unless specified by your physician.
- If you currently take medications, please take them on the day you have pre-admission testing.

How to eat well for your surgery

Surgery can be a major event and cause stress on your body. It may take you many weeks to heal. Infections, blood loss, and slow wound healing can happen. Good nutrition can help improve your surgical outcomes.

You can do your part to make sure you heal well. Boost your nutrition before surgery. Good nutrition helps replace red blood cells. It also helps your wound site heal faster. Having nutritional supplements before surgery can be useful. What you eat before and after surgery matters. Healthy food heals your skin, nerves, blood vessels, muscle, and bone.

Protein

Protein plays a key role in healing. Plenty of protein beforehand can help speed your healing.

- Start eating more protein a few weeks before your surgery day.
- Get 3-4 ounces of protein at each meal every day.
- Eat high value proteins such as fish, chicken, turkey, eggs, milk, nuts and seeds, cottage cheese, yogurt, and peanut butter. Other good sources are lean beef, shrimp, pumpkin seeds, garbanzo beans, and peanuts.
- If you are vegetarian, include soy milk, tofu, and legumes (beans, peas, lentils).

The immune system

The immune system protects your body from bad germs. When you get sick, it helps you heal. It also triggers a response that aids healing. Support your immune system by eating healthy before surgery. This will help you recover quicker.

- Eat foods rich in Omega-3 fatty acids: salmon, sardines, halibut, shrimp, cod, tuna, trout, tilapia, crab, flax seeds, walnuts, canola oil, kale, spinach, collard and turnip greens, winter squash, soybeans, and navy and kidney beans.
- Try to eat 2 servings of non-fried fish each week.
- Avoid foods high in saturated and trans fats, as these foods can cause inflammation which may result in slower healing. Saturated fats are found in fatty red meat, organ meats, cheese and butter. Trans fats are found in cookies, cakes, and pastries.
- Avoid sugar and processed foods.

Antioxidants

Antioxidants come from vitamins and minerals in food which may prevent or delay some types of cell damage. Vegetables and fruits are rich sources of antioxidants.

Examples are listed below.

- Vitamin C builds tissues and supports your health. Good sources are oranges, grapefruit, peppers, kiwi, broccoli, strawberries, cantaloupe, pineapple, mangoes, papaya, baked potatoes, tomatoes, kale, and Brussels sprouts.
- Vitamin E can fight off bacteria and viruses. It is found in olive, sunflower and safflower oils, wheat germ, nuts and nut butters, seeds, avocados, and dark leafy green vegetables such as spinach and broccoli.
- Vitamin A fuels the immune response. Eat sweet potatoes, carrots, peppers, cantaloupe, winter squash, and dark green leafy vegetables such as spinach, kale, and greens for good sources of this vitamin.
- Zinc helps to prevent a weakened immune system and helps wounds heal. Good sources include chicken, beef, lamb, turkey, venison, fresh pork, shrimp, scallops, oysters, crab, sesame and pumpkin seeds, beans, and nuts.

Nutritional supplements

When you don't feel well, which may happen before or after surgery, it can be difficult to get all the nutrients you need from food. Supplements can provide the protein, vitamins, and minerals you need to prepare for surgery. They can also help your body recover after it. You may wish to try over-the-counter products such as Ensure®, Boost®, Juven®, Carnation® Instant Breakfast, or store brand versions at a reduced cost. Nutritional supplements may also be offered during your hospital stay to help with your recovery.

After surgery

- Eat small, light meals the first day or two. This can help if your stomach is upset. If your doctor orders a soft or liquid diet, you may wish to add supplements.
- Eat foods rich in the vitamins and minerals listed to the left.
- Eat high protein foods with each meal.
- Add fiber to prevent constipation. This is a common side effect of pain meds. Food sources are prunes, prune juice, figs, apricots, berries and other fruits, vegetables, legumes, and whole grains.
- Drink eight 8-ounce glasses of fluids a day, unless your doctor says you need less.



DO NOT eat or drink anything after midnight the night before the surgery, unless otherwise instructed.



Day before surgery

1. You may be called to confirm or change the time that you need to arrive at the hospital.
2. If you are going to spend the night after surgery, have one family member bring your personal items to you after your surgery.
3. **Pre-surgery bathing instructions:** Take a shower the NIGHT BEFORE surgery and take a shower the MORNING OF surgery.

DO the following:

- Use a fresh bar or liquid antibacterial soap, such as Dial® or Hibiclens®.
- Wet your body.
- Carefully wash with soap and a clean washcloth.
- Leave the soap on your body for about one minute.
- Rinse well; get all soap off your body.
- Dry well with a clean towel.
- Put on clean clothes.
- Do not use lotion, cream, or powder.

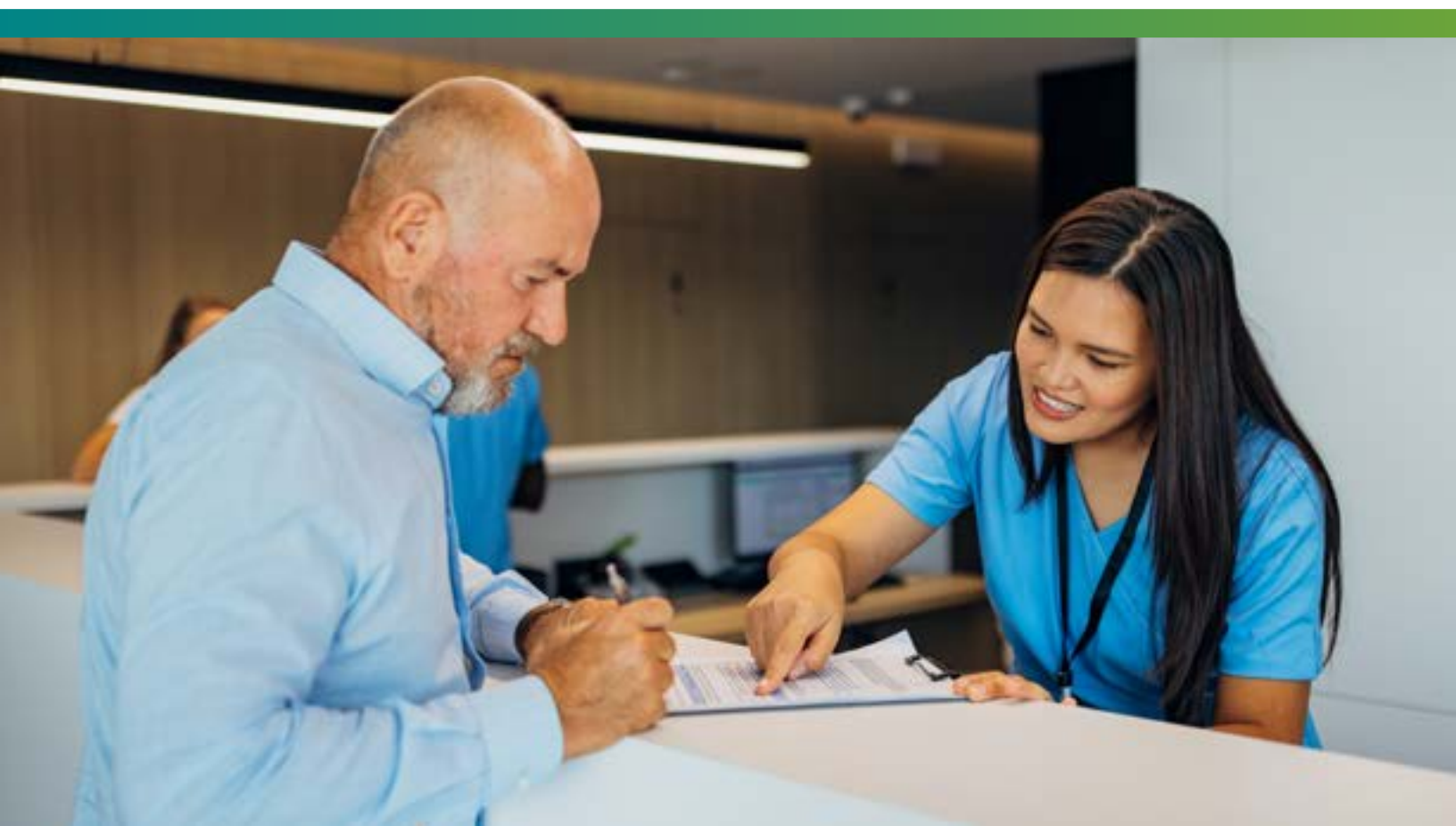
DO NOT shave the area where the surgery will be done within the week prior to your surgery, unless your surgeon tells you differently. Shaving can irritate your skin, which could lead to infection.

4. **DO NOT EAT OR DRINK** anything after midnight the night prior to your surgery, unless otherwise instructed. No water, coffee, juice, gum, or breath mints. If you eat or drink before surgery this may result in a cancellation of your surgery.
5. If you are discharged on the same day as your surgery, you will need someone to drive you home. You will not be able to drive and you cannot take public transportation home from the hospital.
6. If you use a CPAP machine at home for sleep apnea, please bring it with you the day of your surgery.
7. If you use inhalers, please bring them with you the day of your surgery.
8. Responsible adult needs to remain with you for first 24 hours if you are receiving anesthesia in any form.

Day of your surgery

Checklist

- Please take your medications with a small sip of water if instructed to do so.
- If you use inhalers, please bring them with you the day of your surgery.
- If you use a CPAP machine for sleep apnea, bring it with you the day of your surgery.
- Wear clean, comfortable clothing. If you are having cataract surgery, please wear a button-up shirt.
- Bring your medical insurance card, prescription insurance card and picture ID. Admitting may request you to bring your copay or deductible with you the day of surgery.
- Bring a list of your medications.
- If you have a durable power of attorney, living will, or advance directive, please bring a copy of it with you.
- Bring your eyeglasses. Do not wear contact lenses.
- You may wear your dentures or hearing aids to the hospital, but you will be asked to remove them before you go to surgery. Make sure they are in the care of a family member.
- Do not wear any jewelry, makeup, or nail polish (this includes wedding rings, earrings, necklaces, or piercings). Leave all valuables at home.
- CALL your doctor if you are ill (fever greater than 100 degrees or respiratory symptoms). Your surgery may need to be postponed.
- Check-in at the surgery registration area at the time you were instructed during your pre-procedure phone call, unless you are told otherwise by your surgeon.



At SSM Health, your safety is our number one priority.



Family and visitors

- During your surgery, one family member/visitor can wait in the surgical waiting area.
- One family member/visitor is welcome, provided they are not ill.
- If you are discharged on the same day as your surgery, you will need someone to drive you home. You will not be able to drive following your surgery.
- At some of our locations, our innovative MyCare Text Messaging System* gives surgery status updates to one member of the patient's family. This provides peace of mind knowing they won't miss an important update from the surgical care team.

*Please note that standard text messaging rates do apply. Also, please do not text back as this is an automated service.

Spiritual needs

We want to make sure your spiritual needs are met during your stay. If you would like to speak with a chaplain, please notify your nurse upon your admission.

Safety

At SSM Health, your safety is our number one priority. The following steps will be taken in order to ensure the best possible outcome for you. They may occur while you are under anesthesia, without you being aware they are happening.

- Your name and birthdate will be used for identification.
- The correct surgical or procedural site will be identified by you and confirmed with your physician's documentation and diagnostic testing results.
- For certain procedures, the incision site may be marked by your physician, or the incision site may be identified through the use of a special armband. For other procedures, there may be no outward sign of identification.
- Depending upon your procedure, you may be given an antibiotic to help prevent infection.
- If your procedure requires the removal of hair around an incision, a clipper will be used. Using a razor to remove hair can leave small cuts on the skin, which can increase the risk of infection.
- Your temperature, and possibly your blood sugar, will be monitored throughout your procedure to help decrease the risk for infection.
- Keep warm. Don't hesitate to ask for blankets or other ways to stay warm while you wait for your surgery.
- If you have any questions or concerns, please ask the staff.

After surgery

Once your surgery is complete, you will be taken to the post-anesthesia care unit (PACU). This area is where you will wake up from anesthesia and be closely monitored by a registered nurse. No visitors are allowed in the PACU. Once you wake up from anesthesia and meet the criteria to be discharged, you will either go back to the ambulatory surgery department or be transferred to your room on the patient floor. Visitors then will be allowed to see you.

- Take pain medication as directed; it provides the best pain control.
- Tell the doctor or nurse about pain that will not go away.
- Never worry about “being a bother.”

Nurses will ask you to rate your pain on a scale of zero to 10. “Zero” means that you have no pain and “10” means that you have very bad pain. See the example below.

Pain control

Pain can be a sign of a more serious problem. The hospital staff wants to help you control your pain. Talk with your doctor about your choices for pain control.

Make sure you:

- Report your pain to the nurse.
- Take or ask for pain relief medication:
 - When pain first begins
 - Before treatments that may cause pain

The Numeric Scale Pain Scale is for adults and children 10 years and older with the ability to communicate their pain score on a scale of 0 - 10. It requires the patient to be able to verbalize or cognitively indicate a position on a line from no pain to worst pain.



Faces Pain Scale is for children ages 3 - 10 years and those developmentally unable to communicate a numeric score may indicate their pain level by choosing the appropriate facial expression on the visual Faces Scale shown to them. It is a pictorial scale that requires the patient to point to or cognitively indicate a position on a line of faces from no pain to worst pain possible.

WONG-BAKER FACES PAIN RATING SCALE



From Hockenberry MJ, Wilson D: *Wong's Essentials of Pediatric Nursing*, ed. 8, St. Louis, 2009, Mosby. Used with permission. © Mosby.



Going home

- Before discharge from the hospital, you and/or your family member/visitor will be taught how to care for your wound, how to identify signs and symptoms of infection, and who to call if you suspect a problem.
- Keep your surgery site clean and dry. This helps the incision to heal faster and to prevent infection.
- In the first few days after surgery, you may have pain or discomfort. The wound may be slightly red or swollen and drain some clear fluid or a small amount of blood. This is normal and should happen less each day.
- Make sure you take all medications prescribed to you at discharge exactly as you are instructed by your doctor.
- Follow up as directed by your surgeon after your procedure. Make sure you keep all your appointments. If you are unable to make any of your appointments, please call your surgeon's office to reschedule.

Monitor for complications

The following are signs that could indicate a complication from surgery, such as a surgical site infection.

Call your doctor if you have any of the following:

- Fever (greater than 101 degrees)
- Changes in your wound:
 - Increased pain (not related to increased activity)
 - Increased, cloudy or colored drainage
 - Opening of the incision or increased bleeding from the incision
 - Red, hot or tender areas
 - Dark yellow drainage or foul smelling drainage from the incision
- Uncontrolled pain
- New onset of nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea
- Inability to urinate for more than 8 hours

Surgical site infections

What is surgical site infection (SSI)?

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), an SSI is defined as an infection that occurs at the site of surgery within 30 days after an operation or within one year of an operation if a foreign body (artificial heart valve or joint) is implanted as a part of the surgery.

Most patients undergoing surgery have no problems. If an infection should develop, about 70% are superficial, which only involve the skin. The rest are more serious and may involve tissues under the skin, organs, or materials implanted into the body. Sometimes, patients who develop complications have to stay longer in the hospital, and rarely, a patient may die from an infection.

Surgical wound infections can range from redness surrounding a small portion of the incision to deeper infections involving underlying muscles, or to a severe infection spread through the bloodstream.

Risk factors for SSI

All patients undergoing surgery are at risk for complications, including SSIs.

Risk factors for surgical site wound infections include chronic disease such as diabetes, smoking, severe obesity, altered immune system function, poor nutrition, emergency procedures, low body temperature, long

operation times, prolonged pre-operative hospital stay, peri-operative blood transfusions, steroid use, and pre-operative nasal colonization with the bacteria named *Staphylococcus aureus*.

Most SSIs occur when the patient's own microorganisms enter the body through the incision.

Reducing risk of a surgical site infection

In addition to your doctor's recommendations, the following are actions that can decrease the risk of developing an SSI:

- Shower the day before and morning of surgery with an antibacterial soap, such as Dial® or Hibiclens®.
- Within the week before surgery, do not shave near the intended surgical area. Shaving can irritate the skin.
- If diabetic, control blood sugar levels.
- Stay well hydrated. Maintain good nutrition.
- Stop tobacco use/smoking 30 days before surgery.
- Maintain healthy weight; lose extra pounds if overweight.
- Tell your surgeon if you have any other infections.
- Take antibiotics, as prescribed, prior to surgery.



Hand hygiene is essential to infection prevention.



Hospital prevention strategies

According to the CDC, the Institute for Healthcare Improvement, and the Surgical Care Improvement Project, the following are evidence-based strategies that hospitals perform to reduce SSIs. We want you to feel confident that all SSM Health facilities strive to follow these guidelines:

- Antibiotics
 - Use the right antibiotic for the type of surgery.
 - Deliver the antibiotic within one hour before the skin is cut (two hours are allowed for select antibiotics).
 - Discontinue the antibiotic within 24 hours after surgery is completed, 48 hours after surgery is allowed for adult patients undergoing heart surgery.
- If body hair removal at the site of surgery is necessary, remove body hair with clippers. Do not shave the area because shaving can leave small cuts on the skin which can increase the risk of infection.
- Keep blood sugar levels controlled.
- Maintain normal body temperature.

How patient and family members can help

- Hand hygiene is essential to infection prevention. We want you to feel comfortable reminding hospital staff and visitors to clean their hands:
 - BEFORE and AFTER touching you or the hospital environment
 - BEFORE touching the patient's dressing/wound
- Let your doctor and hospital staff know:
 - All medical problems, such as diabetes and high blood pressure. These existing problems could affect the treatment plan for surgery and post-operative care.
 - Any prior diagnosis of a "staph" infection, any prior isolation in any healthcare facility or a previous diagnosis of tuberculosis.
- Please ask your nurse or doctor if you have any questions, or you may call the hospital operator and ask for the infection prevention and control department.

Our prayer

As you enter this place, may you feel the care of God's own great heart.

May you experience healing through compassionate hands and listening hearts.

May you always feel seen and heard.

May you know strength because our prayers join yours.

May we attend with great respect to your needs and wants, and empower your healing.

May we see in you the precious person that God created, incredibly graced and gifted.

May we be worthy of your trust.

For more information
visit: [ssmhealth.com](https://www.ssmhealth.com)





SSMHealth.

Our Mission

Through our exceptional health care services,
we reveal the healing presence of God.

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