

Reducing Presurgery Jitters



Knowing what to expect prior to surgery can reduce pre-operation stress and make you feel more comfortable.

- The hospital will have you sign a surgical consent form. Take the time to read it over. Ask your doctor any questions you may have.
- Expect a visit from the anesthesiologist or the surgeon (or both). They will review the surgical plans with you. This includes the time and length of surgery, estimated recovery room time, and the type of anesthesia being used. The anesthesiologist will need to know about any previous surgeries, any medical conditions, and any allergies to medications. Ask him or her what time you can expect to return to your room.
- Eating in the hours prior to surgery can cause life-threatening vomiting during the operation, so there are usually a prescribed number of hours prior to surgery when no food should be eaten. If a meal is brought to you, don't eat it until you've double-checked with a nurse. It may be a mistake that could cause your surgery to be canceled. Your patient chart should read NPO or non per os (nothing by mouth).
- Depending on the nature of the operation, some surgical "preps" may be ordered. This may include a special liquids-only diet, cleaning and shaving of the surgical area, placing a catheter into the bladder, giving an enema, or putting drops into the eyes.
- A sleeping pill may be offered the night prior to surgery. Most people will feel anxious about the surgery and find the medication helpful. You are not required to accept it, however, and your patient chart should indicate your preference.
- Before surgery, give all valuables or possessions to a friend or relative. These would include jewelry, watches, and eyeglasses. If you wear contact lenses, remove them.