

The Ins and Outs of Ambulatory Surgery



Ambulatory surgery is surgery done on an outpatient basis. This can be done in a hospital. It can also be done at a freestanding center. One reason ambulatory surgeries are more common now than in the past is advanced medical practices. This includes the use of anesthetics that wear off quicker and have fewer side effects.

Common ambulatory surgeries include:

- Endoscopy procedures.
- Hernia repair.
- Some plastic surgeries.
- Tubal ligation.
- Dilation and curettage (D & C).
- Breast biopsy.
- Tonsillectomy.
- Cataract and glaucoma procedures.
- Orthopedic procedures (such as arthroscopy of a knee).
- Benign and cancerous tumor procedures.

Ambulatory or outpatient surgery has many advantages:

- Hospitalization poses the risk of exposure to infections and may also keep patients bedridden longer than is necessary.
- Ambulatory surgery gets you in and out quickly.
- The patient has a good deal of choice as to when the surgery will occur. The surgery is scheduled by appointment for patient convenience.
- Most people prefer healing at home in their own beds to staying in a hospital. The home can be a more comfortable place in which to heal than a hospital with its hectic schedules.
- Medical bills are much lower if you don't have to stay in a hospital overnight.

Things to consider:

- Many procedures need special preparation ahead of time. Follow your doctor's orders exactly.
- You may need someone to drive you home and stay with you as you recover.
- Do not bring valuables with you when you have outpatient surgery.