

Getting Ready for Surgery: Your Checklist

Medical-Surgical • Perioperative / Pre & Post-Op

Good preparation keeps you safe during surgery and helps you heal. Follow your care team's written instructions, because they are made for you.

Follow your eating and drinking times

- **Follow your fasting times exactly.** Food or drink in your stomach can get into your lungs during surgery.
- Usual rule: no solid food for 6 to 8 hours before. Clear liquids, such as water, apple juice, or black coffee, until 2 hours before, or as told.
- Stop food at: _____. Stop clear liquids at: _____.

Ask about your medicines

- Bring a list of all your medicines, vitamins, and herbal products.
- Stop blood thinners, some diabetes medicines, and herbal products only when your surgeon tells you.
- Medicines to stop, and when: _____.

Get your body ready

- Wash your skin with the soap your team gives you, as told.
- **Do not shave near the surgery area.** Tiny cuts let germs in.
- Stop smoking and vaping now. Quitting 4 weeks before surgery is best.

On surgery day

- Remove jewelry, piercings, makeup, and nail polish as told.

- Have an adult drive you home and stay with you for 24 hours.
- Do not drive, drink alcohol, or sign important papers for 24 hours.

Tell your team

- Your allergies and any past problems with anesthesia (sleep medicine for surgery)
- Loose teeth, sleep apnea, or a possible pregnancy

Call your provider today if you have

- A fever, a cold, or a cough before surgery
- A rash, cut, or sore near the surgery area
- Vomiting, diarrhea, or a possible pregnancy
- Questions about which medicines to stop

Call 911 or your local emergency number if you have

- Chest pain or pressure
- Sudden trouble breathing
- Sudden weakness on one side, a drooping face, or trouble speaking
- Bleeding that will not stop

This handout supports, not replaces, advice from your own nurse or doctor.

Online: nclexpace.com/patient-education/preparing-for-surgery/patient

© 2026 NCLEXPace.