



Your guide to **PREPARING FOR SURGERY HANDBOOK**





Welcome to Providence. We want you to know you are in great hands with Providence and we are here to help you with your surgical journey. We are proud to offer the most advanced treatment options in surgical care. We are committed to achieving excellent clinical outcomes and helping our patient to regain quality of life.

We believe the best way to prepare you for your surgery is to have you involved in your care so that you know what to expect during and after your stay with Providence.

This handbook is designed as a quick guide to help prepare you for the days leading up to your surgery, the time while you are in the hospital and during your recovery after being discharged. This handbook will complement our patient education classes/videos and our helpful text message system (Twistle).

In the Weeks Leading up to Your Surgery

Here is a list of important items to be completed in the days and weeks leading up to your surgery.

- Education
 - This handbook will help guide you in preparing for your upcoming surgery and offer information that you will find helpful specific to the surgery you will be having.
 - You might be asked to attend a class or watch a video specific to your upcoming surgery. A link will be given to you or sent to you via text message.
- Returning to home after surgery
 - Your surgeon will let you know how long you will be staying at the hospital. Normally, patients may require 1-2 days in the hospital prior to going home, but depending on the surgery, some patients can go home the day of surgery.
 - Your Care Coach/Care Team: Please arrange for a family member(s) or friend(s) to:
 - Attend the pre-operative class(es)
 - Be available to drive you home after your surgery
 - Be available to you for the first few days at home to help with any needs you may have such as:
 - Running errands
 - Driving you to your appointments
 - Assist with the care of your pets
 - Cleaning and cooking
 - Prepare your home for safety
 - Clear walking paths and stairs in your home of clutter
 - Remove throw rugs and any cords from walk paths
 - Have proper lighting at night
 - Move your commonly used items from the upper and lower cabinets to the countertop to reduce the need to reach or bend over
 - Have shoes that are easy to slip on and off and clothing that is easy to put on and take off available for the first week or 2 after surgery
 - Recognize chairs and beds that are easy to get into and out of
- Healthy Eating
 - Eating a balanced diet and getting plenty of fluids will help with your recovery.
 - Prepare nutritious meals ahead of time and store them in the freezer for your convenience once you return home.
 - Your surgeon may request you to use a specific brand of food supplement leading up to your surgery and after you return home. Please follow all instructions given.
 - Be sure you have the eating and drinking instructions from your surgeon or hospital.



- Stopping smoking, vaping, use of nicotine products
 - Smoking/Vaping/use of nicotine products can slow down the healing process and increase your risk of infection.
 - Work with your doctors to help with stopping smoking.
- Contact your insurance provider for any questions you may have



- Understand your coverage and any financial obligations you might have with your upcoming surgery.
 - Understand what DME (Durable Medical Equipment) (Durable Medical Equipment, i.e., walker, bedside commode) is commonly covered by your insurance.
- Set up your Advanced Directive
 - Advanced Directives are an important part of planning a hospital stay and outlining your wishes for your care.
 - Bring a copy of your Advanced Directive to the hospital on the day of your surgery.
 - If you do not have an Advanced Directive and would like more information, go to Providence.org and search for advanced directive or contact your hospital for assistance.
- Infection Prevention
 - You will receive a shower kit through the mail. Please follow all the instructions in the kit and from your surgeon.
- Stopping of some medications
 - Your surgeon and your doctor will give you instructions should you need to stop certain medications or supplements before your surgery. Be sure to follow all instructions very closely.

Your Care Team

Surgery can be overwhelming, so our goal is to guide you through it with a team approach. Every member of your team is dedicated to providing you with the most advanced and compassionate care. Your team includes (but is not limited to):



- Caregiver (Care coach, family, friends)
- Surgeon
- Surgical Fellow
- Nurse Practitioner (NP) or Physician Assistant (PA)
- Anesthesiologist
- Operating Room Nurses and Techs
- Registered Nurse (RN) and Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA)
- Hospitalist/Internal Medicine Specialist (MD)
- Rehabilitation Team (Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy)

- Dieticians
- Spiritual Care
- Case Manager/Social Workers
- Clinic Registered Nurse and Clinic Medical Assistant (MA)

Prior to Surgery

Clearance for Surgery

All patients undergoing surgery with anesthesia require a medical clearance which may be done with your surgeon, your primary care physician (PCP) or by an internist. The medical clearance includes:

- ✓ Thorough history and physical examination
- ✓ Blood and lab work
- ✓ Diagnostic imaging which might include studies such as a chest x-ray and an ECG

Follow up with any specialists for additional clearances (Cardiac, Renal, etc.)

Commonly, your medical clearance (and cardiac clearance if needed) must be completed at least 3 business days prior to surgery, but no sooner than 30 business days.

Your surgeon and /or hospital will let you know if you will need any further testing, such as a Covid-19 test.



Your surgeon may also require you to complete the following prior to surgery:

- New CT or MRI: this is often because your surgeon needs specific imaging sequences necessary in the operating room
- Specialist evaluations based on the reason for surgery and the surgical approach

If all pre-operative requirements are not obtained at least 24 hours prior to surgery, your surgery may need to be rescheduled.

Within a day or 2 of your surgery, please anticipate a call from our prescreening team. During this call, you will be asked questions about you, your medical history, and your present condition. In certain instances, you might be asked to attend a prescreening appointment.

Preparations for your Upcoming Surgery

Your surgery is quickly approaching. Let's recap on some important items:

Illness

If you develop a fever, signs of a cold, or any other illnesses between now and your surgery date, please notify your surgeon's office right away.

Imaging/X-rays

You might be asked to bring your imaging films/CD to your surgeon's office if they were performed at an outside facility or hospital. Your surgeon may require updated images in preparation for your surgery.

Medications

You might be asked to stop taking certain medications before your surgery. Please work with your surgeon, your primary care physician, or prescribing specialist for instructions on what medications you will need to continue or stop prior to surgery. Unless otherwise specified by your surgeon or physician, stop taking blood thinning medications (Aspirin, Coumadin, Plavix, Eliquis) and Anti-inflammatory medications (Advil, Aleve) at least 7 days prior to surgery date.



If you are experiencing pain and need medication, speak with your surgeon or primary care physician for help with which medication(s) you can take.

Please stop taking all herbals, supplements, and vitamins one week before surgery. Some herbal remedies have been found to be blood thinning.

If instructed to take medications on your surgery date, please only take with a very small sip of water. Please bring a list of any medications/ vitamins/ supplements you are commonly taking (prescribed or over the counter) to the hospital for your team to review.

Nutrition

Preparing your body for the stress of surgery is very important. Eating right leading up to surgery can have a major impact on your recovery and help you avoid infections. In the weeks leading up to surgery, stop unhealthy eating habits and focus on strengthening your diet and body.

Your surgeon may have specific dietary instructions including specific dietary drinks.

Please be sure to follow all instructions.

NOTE: Stop all alcoholic beverages, smoking/vaping, use of tobacco products or cannabis, and taking of any illicit drugs IMMEDIATELY.

Hygiene

If your surgery is scheduled 7 days or more ahead of time, a pre-operative shower kit will be mailed to you. If you do not receive it within 3 days of your surgery, or if you are scheduled within 6 days of your date of surgery, please contact your surgeon's office for instructions on how to obtain your shower kit. Please follow the instructions included in your shower kit unless your surgeon provides specific instructions.

Things to Plan for When You Go Home After Surgery

- Plan and arrange for your caregivers and transportation to and from the hospital. You will need to be cleared by your surgeon before driving. Do not drive while under the influence of pain medications.
- Arrange for your caregiver to stay with you for at least 24 hours after your discharge to help you with things around the house including grocery shopping.
- Your incisions sites may need to be covered for a couple of days while you shower; thus, you may need to buy a shower cap. Specific instruction will be provided at discharge.



What Should You Bring on the Day of Surgery?

Please bring the following items to the hospital with you:

- Photo ID
- Your medical insurance card(s) and pharmacy card
- A list of your present medications (prescriptions, vitamins, supplements, over the counter medications). Include dosage, when you normally take, and the day/time you last took
- Any medications requested for you to bring. Otherwise, do not bring medications
- A change of clothes if staying overnight (Loose fitting and easy to get on and off)
- Shoes (slip on shoes are easier) *No flip flops
- Glasses and/or contact lenses, hearing aids, dentures
- CPAP/BiPAP machine if you require it at home and staying overnight
- Cell phone *Remember to bring power/charging cords
- Credit card or cash ONLY if there are anticipated copayments
- DO NOT BRING ANY VALUABLES SUCH AS JEWELRY, WATCHES, OR CAR KEYS

PLEASE REMEMBER:

The hospital is not responsible for personal items.

Please label all belongings prior to your surgery.

Day of Surgery

Before Coming to the Hospital

- Take your last pre-operative shower per your surgeon's and the facility's instructions
- Do not apply any lotions, hairspray, gel, sunscreen, cologne, or deodorant after showering
- Leave all your jewelry, piercings and watches at home
- Unless instructed otherwise by your care team, take any usually prescribed medications with a small sip of water
- Please follow the nutritional and drinking instructions given to you by your surgeon and/or care team. **If you did not receive any instructions:**
 - please do not eat anything within 8 hours of your scheduled surgery time
 - you may drink clear liquids up to 4 hours of your scheduled surgery time. Examples are:
 - Water
 - Sports drink (i.e., Gatorade)

Arriving at the hospital

Remember, ***it is important to be on time!*** You will be instructed on where to go for checking in and for preparing for surgery

- There might be some last-minute paperwork that requires completing
- Your nurse will:
 - Check your vital signs (blood pressure, pulse, temperature), your height and weight
 - Assist you in performing a pre-surgical cleanse with specific antibacterial wipes commonly from your neck down to your toes
 - Assist you with changing into a hospital gown (your belongings will be placed in a bag and labelled
 - They can be given to an accompanying friend or family member if available
 - Start an IV and run any additional lab work ordered
 - Provide any medications ordered by your surgeon
 - Assist you in completing any additional questionnaires or surveys where required
- Your Anesthesiologist will:
 - Meet with you to discuss your general health and any experiences you have had undergoing surgery (issues waking up, post operative nausea or vomiting, etc.)
 - Discuss the anesthesia you will be receiving and answer any questions you may have
- Your Surgeon/Nurse Practitioner/Physician Assistant will:
 - Meet with you before surgery to go over your surgery, answer any questions, and the two of you together will mark the area where surgery is to occur



In the Operating Room

You will be wheeled into the Operating Room. Here you will be assisted to the correct area to undergo your surgery.

Your Care Team in the OR might include:

- Surgeon(s)
- Anesthesia Provider
- Physician Assistant/ Nurse Practitioner
- Nurse(s) and Surgical Assistants and Technicians

In the Recovery Room (Post Anesthesia Care Unit or PACU (Post Anesthesia Care Unit))

- You will wake up in the Recovery Room. Here you will be monitored and kept comfortable as you recover from anesthesia
- You will be on oxygen as needed
- Your nurse will continue to encourage you to take a deep breath and ask questions to see how you are doing, and to perform simple tasks like wiggling your fingers and toes.
- Your surgeon or a caregiver from the surgical or recovery team will update your designated family member or friend.

Once the needed criteria are met, you will be discharged from the recovery room according to the plan recommended by your neurosurgeon.

Managing Pain after Surgery

One of the goals after surgery is to manage your pain, but keep in mind you may still experience some pain after surgery despite conservative measures and pain medications. You may feel more pain as you increase your activity level, which is normal. Some non-medication pain reduction techniques include:

- Cold packs on or around incision site
- Hot compresses around tight muscles
- Changing position every two hours or getting out of bed
- Music therapy
- Aromatherapy
- Meditation

We may also include a variety of medications to help with managing your pain, including:

- Acetaminophen
- Anti-inflammatory (i.e., Toradol, Celebrex)
- Neurontin
- Dexamethasone
- Muscle Relaxant



Applying the above may help to reduce the need for narcotics and its unwanted side effects such as constipation, dizziness, drowsiness, and confusion.

You may also receive other medications to help manage any nausea or constipation. You may develop post-operatively that may make your pain worse.

These techniques can also be used once you are home. Please work with your Care Team to arrange for any specific medications you might need.

Early Mobility

Movement and activity after surgery is a vital part of your recovery as it will help with reducing the risk of developing pneumonia, developing blood clots, reduce constipation, and will prepare you for your safe return home. Your participation is essential!

Your Care team will assist with your mobility within hours of your surgery under your surgeon's direction. Movement can include:

- Moving in bed
- Beginning exercise
- Sitting upright
- Standing and walking with assistance
- Being up for meals

It is extremely important that you continue with your mobility once you are discharged to progress your recovery. You should continue with any prescribed exercise programs. Your surgeon might also request for you to receive Home Health and might request for you to attend Therapy to help address any areas in need of attention. Therapy could include Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, and or Speech Therapy

Discharge

Your Care Team will assist with you being discharged from the hospital. Discharge, in certain circumstances, can safely occur the day of surgery. Your Care Team will work with your surgeon to determine your readiness to leave. Please be sure that the individual who will be picking you up is available. Discharge can occur any time of the day, but if you are staying overnight discharges are commonly before noon. Your Care Team will be able to be more specific.



Discharge readiness includes:

- Surgical clearance
- Medical clearance
- Demonstrate ability to safely perform basic activities
- Adequate pain management with oral medications
- Follow up appointments are scheduled
- Referrals for assistive devices and/or aftercare arranged for when necessary

You and your family member/friend will receive specific discharge instructions prior to leaving. Please be sure there is understanding on all the instructions. We encourage questions should there be unclear instructions.

Once You Are Home

We are glad you are home! It is well understood that home is one of the best places to recover from surgery. The following are a few notes and reminders to help you as you continue your recovery.

- Please keep the discharge instructions you received from the hospital close by to review if needed.
- Be sure to take your medications as prescribed.
- Continue with all of the non-medicine tactics you were shown for pain control. If your pain is not managed with these tactics and the medicines prescribed, please call your surgeon's office
- Follow all nutritional instructions you have received. This can include any nutritional drinks your surgeon instructed you to take.
- Stay active. But please keep your activity levels at the levels prescribed/instructed by your surgeon and care team.
- Remember to progress your activity slowly, but steadily as instructed by your care team.
- Please follow all precautions and restrictions given to you by your care team.
- Be sure to keep all follow-up medical appointments. This is important so your doctors can ensure that your recovery stays on track.
- Follow all instructions in caring for your surgical incision.
- Please follow any instructions you have received regarding showering/bathing.
- You should not drive until it is cleared by your surgeon.
- Please refer to the "Zone Tool" if there are any concerns with your recovery. If what you are experiencing is not addressed on the "Zone Tool", please contact your surgeon's office for guidance.
- Be sure to check your phone for helpful text messages as we check in with you during this phase of your recovery.

Craniotomy

A Craniotomy is a surgery in which a surgeon must open the skull to perform a needed procedure. Craniotomies are commonly performed to remove brain tumors, correct aneurysms, or relieve pressure on the brain due to trauma. Your surgeon is highly skilled to perform this procedure and will help in actively guiding your recovery.



What to Expect

- There may be the need to shave a patch of hair in the area in which our surgeon will perform the surgery. Most hair surrounding the incision will grow back to cover it over time.
- There will be an incision area commonly closed with stitches or staples (these will be removed within 1-2 weeks of your surgery). There will most likely be a bandage or dressing covering the incision site.
- Discomfort after surgery is not uncommon (headache, incision area pain). Your care team will work hard to help manage your pain making it easier to be an active participant in your recovery.
- Your surgeon will be able to explain any anticipated side effects from your surgery and what to expect as you continue with your recovery.
- Postoperative nausea and dizziness is not uncommon. Your care team will work hard to ensure that any nausea and/ or dizziness is managed allowing you to be an active participant in your recovery.
- It is not uncommon to be tired/fatigued for a few weeks after surgery.
- In most cases, you will begin moving around, sitting, and possibly walking within hours of your surgery. Nursing and Therapy will be assisting you.
- It is our goal that you have your meals out of bed in preparation for once you return home.
- When in bed, you will need to keep the head of the bed elevated. Your care team will help in determining how this can best be achieved once you return home.
- Therapy, nursing, and your surgeon will work with case management to identify any needed assistive devices that might be necessary while in the hospital and after you are discharged.
- Nutrition is an important component to your recovery. Your care team will work with you in progressing your diet based on your toleration and ability to eat and drink.
- There might be the need to perform imaging and/or labs after surgery to see how your recovery is going.
- It is not uncommon to change hospital rooms as you continue to recover from your surgery based on the level of care required.

Day of Discharge

- Your care team, working closely with your surgeon and physicians, will determine when you can be safely discharged from the hospital.
- The individual recognized as the person who will be driving you home will need to be available once the discharge orders have been written
- Your nurse will go over all your discharge instructions with you and your designee(s). These instructions may include:
 - Any medications you will need to take or restart
 - How to care for your incision site
 - Instructions on when you can shower
 - Signs or symptoms to be on the lookout for that may require you to follow up with your surgeon or go to the ER
 - Any specific instructions regarding diet and nutrition
 - Any limitations to activity (lifting restrictions, elevating the head of your bed, etc.)
 - Noted follow up appointments
 - Any requested assisted devices



Pain Management

It is normal to have pain or discomfort after surgery. It isn't normally an indication that something is wrong, but rather the common reaction the body has when it experiences trauma, like surgery. Here is a reminder of things you can do to manage your pain as you continue to recover:

- Remember to take the medications prescribed
- Apply ice compresses to the area of surgery
- Change your position, correct your posture
- Move around
- Keep the room calm, no loud noises, no bright lights
- Relax
- Be sure you are following all the restrictions you were given



If your pain continues to worsen after all the above interventions, contact your surgeon's office.

Nutrition

- Continue with eating a healthy diet
- Continue with any prescribed nutritional supplements
- Continue to hydrate

Constipation

Constipation is a common issue after surgery. This can be due to the anesthesia, dehydration, decreased activity, and pain medications that contain opiates. Here are some ideas to help decrease any issues with constipation:

- Eat fiber rich foods
- Hydrate
- Stay active
- Your doctor can help recognize an appropriate stool softener and/ or laxative



Limitations/Precautions

- Follow lifting restrictions
- Follow all instructions regarding elevation of the head of your bed
- Limit stimulation: Limit bright lights, loud noises, and minimize electronic device use
- No driving until cleared by your surgeon
- Limit household tasks to light cleaning
- Strictly follow showering/bathing instructions

Return to Activity

Recovery after a Craniotomy requires active participation. Please remember that fatigue after surgery is normal. Pace yourself in your recovery. Please remember, that activity can increase your pain and to adjust your activity accordingly.

- Gradually increase your walking in distance and how often you walk daily
- Follow the exercises you were given by your care team at the hospital.
- Home Health might be required to help with your progress and safety
- Your care team may refer you to Therapy to focus on activities that might still be a challenge

Your surgeon will inform you as to when you can:

- Shower
- Drive
- Participate in sexual activity
- Progress your lifting
- Return to work



It is important for you to attend all follow up appointments with your surgeon and your primary care provider.

Call your Surgeon if:

- Your pain is not controlled
- You are not tolerating physical activity
- You have not had a bowel movement in the past 2-3 days
- Your wound is warm/hot to the touch, red, swollen, or there is drainage

Go to the Emergency Room if:

- You have chills or a fever of 100F or higher
- You are experiencing stiff neck, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea
- You have new or worsening symptoms such as:
 - Weakness
 - Numbness/tingling
 - Vision problems
 - Speech issues
 - Seizures
 - Loss of consciousness

Zone Tool For After Surgery

Every Day:

- ✓ Check your wound dressing
- ✓ Balance activity and rest
- ✓ Resume a well balanced diet or the specific diet your physician recommends
- ✓ Take your medication as prescribed

All Clear Zone

This is a safe zone if:

- ✓ My pain is controlled, and I am able to move and do my exercises
- ✓ My surgical dressing looks clean and dry
- ✓ I am able to participate in approved activity including daily walks
- ✓ I am following all restrictions
- ✓ I have had normal bowel movements since I left the hospital



Warning Zone

Call your Surgeon if:

- ✓ Your pain is not controlled by medication, ice, rest
- ✓ You have a fever of 100 or higher or persistent chills
- ✓ You have swelling that is worsening, redness, opening of the surgery site, cloudy or bloody drainage from the surgical site
- ✓ You are not able to tolerate approved physical activity
- ✓ You have not had a bowel movement and stool softeners are not working



Medical Alert Zone

Go to the Emergency Room or call 911 if:

- ✓ You have shortness of breath or chest pain or any medical emergency
- ✓ You have onset of neck stiffness, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea
- ✓ You have worsening of symptoms including weakness, numbness/tingling, vision problems, speech issues, trouble swallowing, seizures, unexplained loss of consciousness

