

The Day of Your Surgery – What to Expect

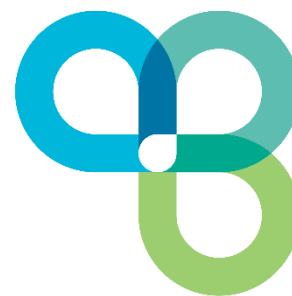
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ENT North

An early start!

Before your operation, you have to arrive at the hospital, find a park, work your way through an astonishing amount of paperwork and have both clerical and nursing staff check your details roughly a thousand times. You then be interviewed by your anaesthetist and have a chance to talk to your surgeon before you actually have your surgery. All this takes much more time than you might think. This is why we ask you to arrive so early, especially if you are having your operation in the morning.

Please note that our staff is usually more familiar with the order of our surgeons' operating lists and how long each procedure will take compared to the hospital's 'standard' assumptions. Please follow our staff's instructions on what time to arrive if they vary from those the hospital gives you. If you have any specific difficulties (e.g. a long journey in the morning), let us know and we'll make the necessary adjustments.

Lots of waiting around

In between each of these steps is a lot of time where nothing seems to be happening to you. In these gaps, staff are seeing other patients, relaying any questions or concerns to your doctors and waiting for answers, and taking care of other patients who are about to have, or who have already had, their operations.

Please bring a book, or an electronic device preloaded with suitable entertainment.

Please note that we order our lists so that young children get their surgery first in the day. We ask them to fast as well (see below), and we're sure that you appreciate that they struggle with being hungry and thirsty more than adults do. We're very grateful for your generosity in waiting that little bit longer.

Repeated questions that get more and more annoying

There are plenty of news articles out there about patients having the wrong operation, or surgery on the wrong body part. We keep asking the same questions because it helps us avoid you being the patient in the news. And yes, you might be the lucky one who points out that we've made a mistake, while you're still awake and able to correct us. We actually think that shows that the boring questions are worth asking.

Fasting

The anaesthetic medication given to send you to sleep, and pain relief that keeps you comfortable, commonly cause vomiting as a side effect. When you are first going to sleep, anything you vomit up can enter your lungs and cause a severe, potentially fatal, lung infection. This is why we ask you to fast before your surgery. We'll give you a 'drink' via IV fluids while you're asleep to avoid any dehydration and promise to feed you as much as you want as soon as you're awake.

Please follow your anaesthetist's instructions about fasting and inform him/her if you have any specific concerns about doing so (e.g. you have diabetes or another medical condition that makes fasting potentially dangerous).

Going home after your surgery

If you are going home on the same day as a general anaesthetic, or any sedating medications, you will need to arrange for someone to take you home. Failing to arrange someone to pick you up will often result in your operation being cancelled. Most hospitals will not let you go home in a taxi in these circumstances either.

We would also advise that you have someone collect you, even if you are going home the day after your operation. You may still need strong pain relief, and side effects of your surgery could make it difficult to concentrate on the road. Check with your car insurer if there are any restrictions on driving after an anaesthetic.

Recovering from your surgery

Each of our post-operative instruction sheets has detailed instructions about how long to take off routine activities, exercise, changes in diet and anything else specific to your surgery. If you are having a combination of operations (e.g. grommets and adenoid surgery), assume you'll need whatever is the longest time period to recover. Many people bounce back quickly, but a little bit of planning and some extra time up your sleeve can make a world of difference to how pleasant you find the experience.

Travelling after your surgery

Some operations specify no flying etc. for a certain period after your operation (e.g. ear drum repair). For some other operations (e.g. tonsillectomy) we'd like you to have easy access to emergency ENT care for a period of time after your operation in case of complications like bleeding.

If you have any travel planned within three weeks of your operation, we'd appreciate you letting us know, well before your operation. Most of the time, there will be no problem at all.

Seeing your surgeon after your operation.

Your surgeon will see you in Recovery and arrange review each day if you are staying in hospital. Our staff will make a post-operative appointment for you, and email this to you. If the time or date is inconvenient, please feel free to call our office on 1300 357 338 to change it to a more suitable one.

Your surgeon will give you a contact number (either a paging service or mobile) to call if you have any urgent issues about your medical care following your operation. We encourage you to contact us if you have any concerns about pain, complications or any other niggling questions that you would like clarifying.

Questions about appointments etc. should be directed to the rooms.