

GENERAL PRE-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

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Preparing for an operation

*“My task before the operation is to be sure that you understand as much as you want to know about the procedure. Be sure that all your questions were answered to your satisfaction before the operation. Having an operation can be one of the scariest things a person may face in their lives. It is something I was well trained to do on a regular basis. I know that you are very special to somebody. I will handle **you** with **special care**.”*

Attitude:

I have witnessed amazing demonstrations of **courage, strength and determination** in my patients over the years. Part of the preparation for an operation is **accepting** the idea that an operation will help you. This may require you to examine your various opinions or fears that you hold toward an operation as well as the diagnosis. You may experience shock, denial, guilt, anger, depression, loneliness and **reflection** on your way to accepting this situation. I believe that this will aid you dramatically in how you will recover from the operation. The more you **embrace** and accept the need for an operation, the **less** pain you are likely to experience in the recovery. The next critical step is preparing yourself for the recovery of the operation. Again, acceptance that this operation will help you and improve your life is crucial. The mind is a very powerful tool, use it to your advantage. Keep the ‘What if...’ Game working for you, not against you. Keep your mind focused on what you want your recovery and outcome to look like. Keep your focus on what you want to feel like at the end of the recovery and take the day by day steps to get there.

Training for a Marathon:

If you have the luxury of having some time before your operation, use it to your advantage. The better shape you come into an operation, the better shape you will be in after the operation for a successful recovery. **Walking** is the main activity used after recovering from surgery. This will improve lung capacity to decrease pneumonia risks. It will decrease the risk of deep venous thrombosis (DVT) (blood clots in the deep leg veins). It will also aid in the return of bowel function. So why wait! Start your walking program before the operation. Take a brisk 20-30 minute walk in good shoes and with a good posture at least 3-5 times a week. It will also give your muscles the muscle memory to do the same activity post operatively. As you walk you can let the dark scary ‘what if’s...’ float away. Use the power of your thoughts to focus on the ‘What if . . .’ the recovery is smooth. ‘What if . . .’ _____!

Rest:

It is important for you to get good rest before and after the operation. Your body can do some amazing healing when you give it some rest.

Diet:

Please, nothing by mouth after midnight the night before your operation. However, it is important to keep your nutrition up leading up to an operation. A well balanced diet with good protein intake will help with the healing process. Vitamin C is known to be important in collagen formation and wound tensile strength. Zinc is important as it also aids in collagen formation and immune function. The support in the literature is not strong that the use of Vitamin C or Zinc will improve surgical outcomes. Some foods rich in vitamin C are: orange, grapefruit, red berries (strawberry, raspberry), melons (cantalope, honey dew, watermelon), bell peppers, tomato, broccoli and spinach. Some foods rich in zinc are: liver, beef, lamb, venison, yogurt, spinach, peanuts, seeds(pumpkin, squash, watermelon). Using supplements of Vitamin C or Zinc is the second best way to get what you need. For Vitamin C taking 500mg twice a day is sufficient. For Zinc a dose of 15mg a day will be enough.

You should stop everything by mouth at midnight the night before your scheduled operative day unless instructed differently by your anesthesiologist. Going to the operating room with an empty stomach helps decrease the risk of vomiting during the operation. Vomiting during the operation can increase the risk of pneumonia during the recovery of the operation.

Medications:

It is best to continue your regular medications prior to your operation. There are a few exceptions to this. Please stop taking Aspirin and Vitamin E 1 week prior to surgery. Both of these can affect platelet function and raise the risk of post operative bleeding if not stopped in time. Motrin, Advil, ibuprofen, Aleve should all be stopped a couple of days before surgery. If you are diabetic, hold your morning insulin the day of surgery and take a half dose the night before. If you are on oral hypoglycemics, hold the morning dose. Your anesthesiologist will typically call you the night before to get your medical history, review your medications and give instructions on medication and eating. It is important to continue blood pressure and heart medications. Please bring your inhalers the day of surgery. If you use a C-PAP or Bi-PAP machine for sleep apnea, ask your anesthesiologist if you should bring it.

Breast procedures:

Here are a couple of tips for a smooth recovery. A sports bra that fastens in the front works great. A bag of frozen popcorn kernels works great for post operative discomfort. Get a good hair washing in the night before your procedure. Remember your frozen popcorn kernels (get two and rotate them).

Second Opinions:

If you think about it you should do it. I believe that it is good to seek different opinions about your surgical options. You may learn more about the choices. I also believe it is to your benefit to have a connection with your surgeon. You should work with a board certified surgeon that you have confidence in and is willing to help you through the surgical process. I am a very capable surgeon, but I may not be the right surgeon for you (scheduling, personality, approach). That is okay. It is more important that you have the team that is best for you.