

# Before and After Surgery

After careful consideration, you and your healthcare provider have determined that surgery is the right choice for you. Inpatient or outpatient, any type of surgery may make you feel a little nervous. Several steps may be taken to **help prepare you** and those around you for what to expect.

## Before

### 1 Month

- Ask your healthcare provider about DVT risk.
- Make sure to check with your insurance provider to determine how much of your procedure will be covered.
- Psychologically prepare yourself for what to expect. It's important that you understand all the details of your surgery so that you can better prepare your friends and family to support and help care for you as you recover.
- If any special services or equipment are needed, check with your insurance carrier prior to surgery to make sure they are covered.
- Important questions to ask your healthcare provider include:
  - What are the risks and side effects of having the surgery?
  - How long will I be in the hospital?
  - Will I need home care or assistance?
  - What will be the extent of disability, if any, following the surgery?
  - How long should I expect my recovery to take?
  - How long before I can resume daily activities?
  - Will I need any special equipment while recovering at home?

### 2 Weeks

- Talk to your healthcare provider about whether or not there might be a need for a blood transfusion during surgery. You may want to consider having your own blood taken ahead of time, should the need for a transfusion arise.
- Prepare a few meals in advance and freeze them. Stock up on staples and easy menu options.

### 10 Days

- Your healthcare provider may ask you to stop taking aspirin or any similar medication, as it inhibits blood clotting. Acetaminophen may be a recommended substitute.

### Several Days

- If you take an anticoagulant such as warfarin, you may be admitted several days before surgery to switch to a shorter-acting alternative that can be stopped right before surgery.
- Pack belongings such as pajamas, bathrobe, and slippers.
- Obtain information about visiting hours, rules, and limitations.
- Rely on your friends and family members for support. Never hesitate to ask for help or tell them what you need.

### Night before

- You may be told not to eat or drink anything after midnight.

## After

### 1 Week

- Surgery takes a lot out of your system. Prepare to be exhausted. Arrange for a friend or relative to stay with you to help prepare meals, feed your pets, and water plants.
- Certain symptoms are completely normal, even after the most minor surgery, such as pain, nausea, and lack of energy. Make sure you rest, and follow your healthcare provider's exact instructions.
- Alert your healthcare provider if you experience any signs of a cold or respiratory infection (fever, chills, coughing, runny nose), or if you're having trouble tolerating your medications.
- Be sure to contact your healthcare provider if you ever have any questions about post-operative care.