

Getting Ready for Abdominal Flap Surgery

Name _____

Surgeon _____ Phone number _____

Pre-operative clinic date _____

Surgery date _____ Surgical procedure _____

- Call 801-587-4300 after 2 p.m. the business day before surgery to find out when you should arrive.
- If surgery is scheduled for a Monday, call after 2 p.m. the Friday before.
- Check in on the third floor of the Huntsman Cancer Institute (HCI) Hospital in the surgery waiting area.

We know you may feel anxious about having surgery. We will do everything we can to make you feel safe.

This factsheet tells you how to get ready for your surgery. It also tells what you can expect at the hospital.

When planning the surgery

Tell your surgeon all the medicines you take:

- Prescription medicines
- Over-the-counter medicines
- Vitamins and other supplements
- Herbal remedies

Some medicines can cause problems during and after your surgery. Your surgeon may need you to change or stop taking them.

3 weeks before surgery

Stop smoking. Smoking causes problems with healing. Your team will not do reconstruction for people who currently smoke.

If you smoke, stop smoking at least 3 weeks before your surgery date. This includes nicotine patches, gum, vaping, or chew tobacco.

Avoid secondhand smoke. Ask people who smoke in your home to stop or to smoke outside before and after your surgery.

Stop taking hormone medicines. You need to stop taking these medicines 3 weeks before your surgery:

- Tamoxifen
- Hormone replacement
- Birth control

Talk with your care team about when it is OK to start taking these medicines again.

1 week before surgery

Stop taking medicines that thin your blood. Here is a list of medicines to stop taking 1 week before your surgery:

- Products that have aspirin such as Bayer®, Excedrin®, and Alka Seltzer®
- Products that have ibuprofen such as Advil® or Motrin®
- Products that have naproxen such as Aleve®

Talk to your surgeon if you take aspirin to prevent stroke or heart problems. If you have recently taken a prescription blood thinner, you should have a plan for when to stop and restart your medicine. Speak to your surgical team if you have concerns.

Stop taking herbal remedies and vitamins. These products can react with the medicines your care team will give you to help with pain and prevent infection. For example, vitamin E and fish oil can raise your risk of bleeding.

1 day before surgery

After 2 p.m., call 801-587-4300 to find out what time you should arrive for your surgery. If surgery is scheduled for a Monday, call after 2 p.m. the Friday before.

In the evening, shower. Wash the surgery areas with germ-killing soap.

After midnight, do NOT eat or drink anything. This includes water.

Day of surgery

All day, do NOT eat or drink anything.

- You can take the daily medicine your surgeon allows. Take it with a sip of water early in the morning.
- You may brush your teeth. Do not swallow any water.

Before you come to the hospital:

- Wear comfortable clothes that fit loosely. Choose clothes that open in front.
- Do not wear makeup, moisturizers, creams, or lotions.
- Do not wear nail polish.
- Do not wear wigs. Do not wear any hair ornament or extension that has metal in it. Do not wear any jewelry, including wedding rings. If you cannot remove your rings, the care team will tell you what to do.
- Do not bring valuables with you.
- You can wear eyeglasses, contact lenses, dentures, and hearing aids to the hospital and take them off just before surgery. If you need a case, we can give you one.

What should I bring with me to the hospital?

- A form of ID with your picture.
- Your insurance card. Be ready to pay insurance co-pays or deductibles.
- Your flex spending card for prescriptions if you have one.
- Something to read or do while you wait for your surgery.

At the hospital

At your appointment time, go to the third floor of the HCI Hospital. Turn left as you get off the elevator.

Check in at the surgery desk.

After you check in, a staff member will take you to a room where you will get ready for surgery.

Your nurse will do these things:

- Confirm your surgery time.
- Let you know of any delays.
- Make sure that all the needed testing is done.
- Confirm your type and location of surgery.

Your surgery team will meet you before you go to the operating room. They will do these things:

- Place an IV in your arm.
- Hook you to monitors that check your blood pressure, heartbeat, and other vital signs during surgery.
- Draw surgery lines on your skin as needed.
- Answer any last-minute questions you have.

In the operating room

You will lie on a comfortable, padded operating table. Your anesthesiologist will give you medicine to make you drowsy through the IV in your arm.

In the recovery room

After your surgery, the team moves you to the recovery room. You will still be connected to the monitors. A recovery nurse will be there to care for you. When your heartbeat, blood pressure, and oxygen level are stable, you will go to a hospital room.

A team member will let your friends and family know as soon as you are out of surgery. They cannot visit until you are in your hospital room.

Your stay in the recovery room will last 1–4 hours. Most patients wake up 30–60 minutes after surgery. Many do not remember the recovery room at all.

In your hospital room

Nurses will check that you are recovering well. Your surgery team will also check on your progress.

Most people who have abdominal flap surgery spend 4–5 nights in the hospital. Most patients spend a lot of time sleeping for the first 24–48 hours. This is normal.

Usually, you can start having food and water by mouth or get out of bed with help about 24 hours after surgery.

We make sure of these things before you go home:

- Your pain is controlled.
- You can eat and drink.
- You can sit up and walk.

