

Summary 8. Prepare for Surgery



Your doctor may advise surgery. You have the right to know what type of surgery, why you need it and the possible risks and side effects. You can give consent or refuse treatment, but you must freely decide.

Before you decide, you must be given all the facts the average person in your situation needs to know.

This includes:

- Benefits and risks
- Possible side effects
- Treatment choices
- Who will provide the surgery
- Results of refusing the surgery

If you agree to surgery, you will be told:

- Who will do the surgery
- How to prepare for surgery
- Which type of anesthesia (sedative) will be used, why, the risks and side effects

To help you decide about surgery:

- Bring a patient advocate or family member with you to meet the surgeon.
- Ask your written questions.
- Take notes about what was said.
- Repeat facts you hear to be sure you are clear about what was said.
- Ask the surgeon about his experience in doing this type of operation.
- Talk about your medical history, related family illnesses, your medications and your daily habits.
- Ask if there is written information on hand for you to review.
- Ask for the surgeon's contact information if you have more questions.
- Ask for a second opinion if it is a hard decision for you.
- Parents or guardians have the right to give or refuse consent for their children up to the age of 18 years.

Before you are sedated for surgery:

- Check your identification bracelet (name and birth date) – if there are errors, tell someone right away.
- Ask staff to confirm the type of operation and on what part of your body.
- Ask the doctor to mark your body site where surgery will be done. Make sure it is correct.

After surgery:

- Follow all care instructions provided.
- Tell staff if you feel pain or have any concerns.

Learn...to be SAFE. Go to Manitoba Institute for Patient Safety websites www.safetoask.ca and www.mbips.ca.