



## PREPPING FOR SURGERY

### 7 WAYS TO GET READY FOR YOUR SAME-DAY OPERATION

As the old song says, what a difference a day makes. If your doctor has scheduled you for surgery, you may be surprised to learn that you need not spend a night in the hospital. More than half of all operations in the U.S. are now done on a “same-day” basis—including many for which overnight stays were once routine.

But the new approach requires planning ahead. At Monmouth Medical Center, about 60 percent of same-day surgery patients come in sometime during the 10 days prior to their procedure for pre-admission evaluation and testing, says nurse Fe Babbitt, clinical director of same-day surgery. This process usually includes a nursing assessment and a review of anesthetic needs and may also feature blood work, X-rays and/or CT (computed tomography) scans. It all takes an hour to an hour and a half.

There are also things *you* should do before the date of your operation. Experts suggest seven steps to prepare for that day:

**1. ASK QUESTIONS.** You’ll have greater peace of mind if you’re well informed about what lies ahead. What is the procedure expected to accomplish? What are the risks? Why has your surgeon chosen this approach rather than another? How will you feel after your operation? Should you refrain from eating, drinking or taking medicines for a period before the surgery—and if so, for how long?

**2. CHECK YOUR INSURANCE.** Confirm that your surgeon’s office has completed any precertifications your health insurance company may require. Consult your insurer’s wallet card if you’re unsure what is necessary.

**3. FIND SOMEONE TO HELP.** When the hospital releases you, you may still be physically shaky and

mentally woozy. “The sedation doesn’t fully leave your system for 24 hours,” says Babbitt. Arrange for someone to give you a ride or accompany you home—you won’t be allowed to drive *or take a cab alone*. If you live alone, see if a friend or family member can stay with you for the first 24 hours to assist you with meals, medications and bathroom visits and to help spot any postoperative problems.

**4. ARRANGE FOR CHILD CARE.** It follows that if children or others depend on *your* care, you’ll need to make sure a spouse, family member, babysitter or friend can pinch-hit with these responsibilities for a day or two.

**5. GET YOUR HOME READY.** Ask your doctor if you’ll need to make any modifications to your home. If stairs will be a problem, for example, should you set up a temporary bedroom downstairs?

**6. STOCK THE PANTRY.** Find out if you’ll have any dietary restrictions in the first days after your surgery, then make sure there’s an ample supply of appropriate food and drink on hand—perhaps including convenient frozen meals that will require minimal effort to prepare.

**7. PLAN DIVERSIONS.** Recovering from surgery is no picnic, but reading or watching TV may offer a distraction and help pass the time. So rent some videos and pick up some books and magazines. (And remember: You may be more ready for Dave Barry just now than for Immanuel Kant.)

After your surgery, be sure to take promptly any prescribed medications that you are given for postoperative pain. Give yourself the rest you need, and you may well find that for recuperation, there’s no place like home. ☺