

# Before and After Day Surgery

**Your surgery will be at the:**

- Halifax Infirmary
- Victoria General
- Dartmouth General Hospital

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_



# Before and After Day Surgery

- This pamphlet will help you learn how to care for yourself safely before and after day surgery.
- There is space near the end of this pamphlet to write down questions for your health care team.

## **As a Day Surgery patient, you will:**

- › come to the hospital on the day of your surgery.
- › have your surgery done in the Operating Room (O.R.).
- › return home after your surgery. **You must have a responsible adult take you home and stay with you for 24 hours (1 day) after you are discharged. Do not drive yourself home.**

## **Your appointment**

- Your surgeon's office will call you with a surgery date and time. If you do not hear from them, call your surgeon's office.
- **If you are not able to keep your appointment, call your surgeon's office.**
- **Your surgery may be cancelled if you are late.**

- If you have a fever (temperature above 38 °C or 100.4 °F), a cold, or flu-like symptoms, call your surgeon's office to tell them. Your surgery may need to be rescheduled.
- Delays in the O.R. may cause a change in your surgery time. There is a chance that your surgery may be cancelled if there is an emergency. If this happens, your surgeon's office will call you to arrange a new date.
- You may need tests before your surgery. This will depend on your general health and the type of surgery you are having. Staff will call you to arrange these tests before your surgery, if needed.

## **2 weeks (14 days) before surgery:**

- Smoking slows down your body's ability to heal. It is best if you can stop smoking and vaping for 2 weeks before your surgery. If you are not able to do this, **do not smoke after your evening meal, the night before your surgery.** Smoking can cause more fluid in your lungs. This could cause breathing problems if you have anesthetic (medication that helps control pain) or sedation (medication used to put you to sleep before surgery) during your surgery.

## 1 week (7 days) before surgery:

- You may need to stop taking some of your medications before your surgery. Tell your surgeon if you are taking any of these medications or supplements:
  - › Blood thinners (like warfarin) or heart medications, like ARBs and ACE inhibitors
  - › Weight-loss medications, like Ozempic®
  - › Over-the-counter medications, like Aspirin® (ASA)
  - › Herbal products
- Follow the instructions you were given about your medications in the Perioperative Anesthesia Clinic or the Pre-admission Clinic.
- If you have allergies to any medications and you do not know their names, check with your pharmacy or primary health care provider (family doctor or nurse practitioner) before your surgery.

## The night before surgery:

- Take a bath or a shower the evening before or the morning of your surgery. Wash all parts of your body, including your hair. **Do not use scented products.** Nova Scotia Health is scent-free.
- You will be given instructions about how to get your skin ready for surgery, if needed.

- **Do not smoke or vape after your evening meal the night before your surgery.**
- **Nova Scotia Health is smoke-free.** Ask a member of your health care team about the Smoking Cessation Program, if needed.

### **The night before surgery:**

- **Do not eat any food, including candy, after midnight the night before your surgery.**
- **You may drink CLEAR LIQUIDS up until 2 hours before your surgery, unless told otherwise by your doctor.** Clear liquids include:
  - › Water
  - › Pulp-free juice, like apple or cranberry juice (**no orange juice**)
  - › Sports drinks (like Gatorade® or Powerade®)
  - › Tea or coffee **without milk or cream**
- You may take your medications as told by your doctor with sips of water.
- You may brush your teeth.

**If you do not follow these instructions, your surgery will be cancelled.**

## Day of surgery

- Leave all valuables (like jewelry, money, credit cards, cheque books) at home. The hospital is not responsible for the loss of any item.
- **Do not wear any jewelry, including toe rings.** Any item used to pierce **ANY** body part (like the nose, belly button, tongue, or ear) must be removed at home.

## Items to bring to the hospital:

- Your provincial health card
- All of your medications in their original containers (including puffers, patches, injections, creams, and over-the-counter or herbal products)
- CPAP machine (if you use one)
- Walking aids (crutches, cane), if needed
- Braces or slings for after your surgery, if needed
- Loose-fitting clothing to wear home (like a sweat suit and comfortable shoes)
  - › Anything tight may not be comfortable at the surgery site (area where you had surgery), or may be too tight to fit over a cast or dressing

- Wear your dentures
  - › Just before you go to the O.R., we will ask you to remove them and place them in a denture cup labelled with your name.
- A storage case for your hearing aid, if you have one
- A storage case for your glasses, if you are wearing them
  - › We will take your glasses just before you go to the O.R.
  - › They will be returned to you in the recovery area
- **Do not** wear contact lenses
  - › If this is not possible, bring your lens container and cleaning solutions
  - › Remember to tell your nurse that you are wearing contact lenses
  - › You must remove them before you go to the O.R.

## **Go to the Same Day Surgery Unit:**

- Halifax Infirmary, 5th floor
  - **Arrive 3 hours before your scheduled surgery time**, or as told by your surgeon's office.
  - › **Exception:** If your surgery is scheduled for 7:30 a.m., arrive by 5:30 a.m.
  - Use the main entrance and register at a kiosk or ask staff at the information desk for directions.

- Victoria General, Victoria building, 10th floor  
(If you are arriving before 6 a.m., use the Dickson Building entrance)
  - **Arrive 3 hours before your scheduled surgery time**, or as told by your surgeon's office.
  - › **Exception:** If your surgery is scheduled for 7:30 a.m., arrive by 6 a.m.
  - Take the Victoria building elevator to the 10th floor, then follow the signs to the Registration area.
- Dartmouth General Hospital, main level
  - **Arrive 2 hours before your scheduled surgery time**, or as told by your surgeon's office.
  - › **Exception:** If your surgery is scheduled for 7:30 a.m., arrive by 6 a.m.
  - Register at the Day Surgery Unit.

## **Same Day Surgery Unit**

### **Pre-operative (Pre-op)**

- This is where you will get ready for the O.R.
- **Food or drinks are not allowed in the pre-op room.**
- Staff will give you a hospital gown, a housecoat, and slippers to change into.
- Your clothes and other belongings will be placed in a locker.



- You may bring someone to wait with you in the pre-op area until it is time for you to go to the O.R. Ask a member of your health care team if you are able to have someone stay with you.
- The pre-op nurse will talk with you as part of your pre-op assessment. They may ask you questions that you have already answered. They need to ask these questions to meet Nova Scotia Health's patient safety standards.

## **Surgery**

### **The Operating Room (O.R.)**

- A nurse will talk with you before you go to the O.R. They will ask you questions from a surgical safety checklist.
- The air in the O.R. can feel cold. We will give you a warm blanket.
- Staff will help you move to a bed.
- You will have an intravenous (I.V.) tube placed in a vein in your arm. Through the I.V., you will get medications that will help you relax and may make you go to sleep.

- Depending on what surgery you are having, a large pad may be placed on your leg, back, or shoulder. This is called a grounding pad. It is used for safety.
- Your surgeon and anesthesiologist (a doctor who puts you to sleep for your surgery) will talk with you before your surgery to answer any questions you may have.

## **Updating your support persons about your progress**

- Your support persons are an important part of your care.
- Every Nova Scotia Health hospital has a waiting area for support persons to wait in.

### **If you are having surgery at the Halifax Infirmary or Victoria General:**

- A liaison nurse visits the waiting area several times during the day.
- They will tell your support persons about your condition and progress.
- The liaison nurse works Monday to Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

## **If you are having surgery at the Dartmouth General Hospital:**

- We are changing how we contact support persons. Ask a member of your health care team how your support persons will be contacted when you are out of surgery.

## **After surgery**

### **Recovery area**

- You will wake up in the Post-Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU). Most patients recover from their anesthetic in this area.
- The nurses in the PACU will closely check your:
  - › I.V.
  - › Pulse
  - › Dressings
  - › Breathing
  - › Drainage tubes
  - › Oxygen levels
  - › Blood pressure
- The nurses may give you oxygen through nasal prongs (tubes placed in your nostrils) or a face mask, if needed.
- The nurses will check your pain level. You may be asked to rate your pain on a scale of 0 to 10.
- The nurses may give you medications to help with pain, as needed. They will keep checking your pain levels to make sure you are as comfortable as possible.

- The skin around the surgery site may look like it has been dyed. This is normal. The dye is from a liquid that O.R. staff use to clean your skin before surgery.
- When you are more awake and comfortable, PACU staff will take you to the post-recovery area to get ready to go home.

### **Post-recovery area**

- A nurse will talk to you about what to expect at home. Staff will go over instructions about your care at home and answer your questions.
- These instructions will include:
  - › What type of activities you will be able to do when you go home (like housework, lifting, driving)
  - › Appointments for follow-up visits
  - › Prescriptions for pain medication, if needed
- The nurse will then help you get dressed in your loose-fitting clothing to go home.
- If you have questions about your surgery or your care at home, ask your health care team before you are discharged.

## At home

If you have questions or concerns about your anesthesia care after a general anesthetic, regional anesthetic, or intravenous (I.V.) sedation:

- If you had surgery at the **Halifax Infirmary or Victoria General**:
  - › Phone: 902-473-4326
- If you had surgery at **Dartmouth General Hospital**, call your surgeon's office.
  - › Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**If you need help right away, call 811, go to a walk-in clinic, or go to the nearest Emergency Department.**

- **You must have a responsible adult drive you home and stay with you for the first 24 hours after you are discharged.** When you are ready for discharge, a staff member will call this person. **You will not be allowed to walk home, take a taxi or bus alone.**

## **For the first 24 hours after your surgery:**

- › **Do not** drive a car or operate heavy machinery. You must have a responsible adult drive you home from the hospital. **If you are taking a taxi or a bus, you must have a responsible adult with you.**
- › **Do not** drink alcohol.
- › **Do not** sign any legal documents or important papers.
- › **Do not** act as the primary caregiver for anyone (including children). Arrange for someone to help you for a few days, if needed.
- › **Do not** drink alcohol while taking any pain medication (like narcotics).

## **Questions for my health care team:**

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# Notes:

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The information in this pamphlet is for informational and educational purposes only. The information is not intended to be and does not constitute health care or medical advice. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

Find this pamphlet and all our patient resources here:  
<https://library.nshealth.ca/Patients-Guides>

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time:  
Call 811 or visit: <https://811.novascotia.ca>

*Prepared by:* HI, VG, and DGH staff  
*Designed by:* Nova Scotia Health Library Services

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The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.