

Ambulatory (Outpatient) Surgery at the Milstein and Allen Pavilions

Welcome to Columbia University Medical Center. This guide describes what happens as you prepare for your surgery. Ask your doctor or nurse if you have any questions or concerns about your surgery.

What happens before my surgery?

Your surgeon will explain your operation, the benefits and possible risks. After answering any questions you may have, you will sign a consent form



You may be told to see your medical doctor or nurse practitioner (NP) for an exam before surgery. This is called medical clearance. It is done to make sure that you are in the best possible health for your surgery.

Your surgeon may order blood tests, an electrocardiogram (ECG) and/or a chest x-ray to be done a few days or weeks before your surgery. An NP may meet with you, to gather information and do a brief exam. You may also meet the anesthesiologist, who will explain anesthesia, review your medications and have you sign a consent form for anesthesia. You may be told to take some of your medications and not others before or on the day of surgery.



You must arrange for a responsible adult to take you home from the hospital after your surgery. **You must have an escort to take you home or surgery will be cancelled.**

What should I do the evening before surgery?

A representative from the hospital will call you on the evening before surgery to review your instructions. You will be called on Friday if your surgery is for Monday.

If you do not hear from the Milstein Pavilion representative between 4 p.m and 6:15 p.m., call 212-305-0973.

If you do not hear from the Allen Pavilion representative by 6 p.m., call 212-932-4104.



These topics will be discussed:

- Time and place: You will be told when and where to come on the day of surgery.
- Eating and drinking: Most patients can not have anything to eat or drink after 12 midnight on the night before surgery. Having an empty stomach will decrease the chance of nausea and vomiting.
- Medications: Some patients are asked to take some of their medications with a sip of water on the day of surgery. The nurse or representative will review which medications to take and which to skip on that day.

What should I do on the morning of surgery?

- ✓ Shower, shampoo, and brush your teeth as usual. Rinse your mouth, but do not swallow the water
- ✓ Remove all jewelry, including wedding bands and all pierced jewelry. Leave items of value at home. Do not bring large bags of clothing.
- ✓ Remove any red or frosted nail polish. Clear and neutral colors are allowed.
- ✓ Remove contact lenses. Glasses may be worn to the hospital and then given to a family member.
- ✓ **Do not eat or drink unless told to do so.** Do not have candy or gum, or smoke on the day of surgery.



- ✓ Before leaving home take the medication you were told to take with a sip of water.
- ✓ Bring all medications with you, including eye drops and inhalers. If you take many medications, write down the name, strength and how often you take each one.
- ✓ Arrive at the hospital at the correct time. Parking is located at 165th St. and Fort Washington Avenue for the Milstein Pavilion and at 5141 Broadway at 220 Street for Allen Pavilion.



What happens at the hospital?

When you arrive on the unit, the clerk will sign you in and check your insurance. You will then be brought to the waiting area and given a locker for your clothes. You will put on a hospital gown, bathrobe and slippers. You can relax in this room in a recliner. One or two family members can stay with you.

The nurse will identify you, place a hospital ID band on your wrist, write an admission assessment note and briefly review the day's plan. You will be asked to confirm the procedure you are to have, the site of the operation and your signature on the consent form. In most cases, the surgery site will be marked. Your temperature, heart rate and blood pressure will be taken. The surgeon and anesthesiologist will briefly meet with you.



When you are called for surgery you must remove any dentures, glasses and wigs. Give them to your family. Your family can have something to eat in the cafeteria and wait for you in the waiting area. The surgeon will talk with your family when surgery is done.

Most patients put on an operating room (OR) hat. You will be brought to the OR and helped onto the OR table. An intravenous (IV) line will be placed into an arm vein. This is used to give you fluids and medicines. It will stay in place during and for a while after surgery.

The doctor or nurse will connect you to a heart monitor and take your blood pressure. A small device called a pulse oximeter will be placed on your finger to measure the oxygen in your blood. You may be asked to position yourself in a certain way for your surgery.

After surgery you will be moved to the recovery area. The nurses will monitor your blood pressure, heart rate, breathing and pain level. They will give you pain medication as needed. Before you go home, you will be given something to eat and drink. You may be asked to urinate before you go home.

After you receive your discharge instructions and have all your questions answered, you will be able to go home with your escort.



This information is brief and general. It should not be the only source of your information on this health care topic. It is not to be used or relied on for diagnosis or treatment. It does not take the place of instructions from your doctor. Talk to your health care providers before making a health care decision.