

# Before Your Surgery: How to Prepare

For most surgeries, there are several things you must do. If these things are forgotten or done wrong, your surgery may get canceled or rescheduled. So, it's important to do these things before your surgery. Here are the "must dos."

Before the surgery, tell your doctors all the medicines and natural health products you take, especially blood thinners, including aspirin. Some of these can increase the risk of bleeding or interact with anesthesia. Your doctor will tell you which medicines to take or stop before your surgery.

Always follow your doctor's directions for preparing, including when or if you should stop eating and drinking. Be sure you have an adult friend or family member who will drive you home. Anesthesia and pain medicine make it unsafe for you to drive after your surgery.

As you can imagine, hospitals need to know without any doubt that they are doing surgery on the right person. So bring your photo ID and any other paperwork that your hospital may have asked for.

All surgeries have risks. So before the surgery, talk to your doctor so that you understand what's happening, including all the risks and benefits. You'll also need to read and sign some forms. If you have questions, it's always okay to ask.

Now here are a few other things that can help make your surgery go well. On the day of your surgery, remove jewelry and piercings, and take out your contact lenses, if you wear them.

Don't shave the surgical site yourself. Let the "trained professionals" do that, if it's needed. Once your surgery is over, you'll get specific instructions about recovery and what you can do to care for yourself at home.

Surgery can be stressful. But knowing what to expect and how to prepare can help. And if you have any questions or concerns, you can always call your doctor.