THE CARE PARTNER PROJECT

Preview Safe & Sound™ Checklists

Support Surgery and Recovery

Contact us for more information or to subscribe:
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YOUR LOGO

There is no such thing as ***"routine surgery."*** *Even the most common operations have risks, and ALL are a risk for infection.*

When surgery is recommended, and it's not urgent, here's how you, as a Care Partner, can help your loved one increase their chances for the best possible outcome.

Get independent 2nd or 3rd opinions *from doctors who don't know one another. (Some doctors are reluctant to disagree with a doctor who's a friend.)*

Talk to Board Certified doctors known to—

- *Take time to listen and respond to patients' questions and concerns. You may have to "ask around" for suggestions from you friends and family.*
- *Operate in a highly-rated hospital.*

Use these helpful and reliable sources to find hospital ratings:

- *Hospital Safety Grade*
- *Hospital Compare*

As always, go to every doctor appointment *and take good notes for your loved one.*

CARE PARTNER, YOUR HELP IS INVALUABLE!

HOW TO HELP

GET GOOD INFO FOR MAKING A DECISION ABOUT SURGERY:

KNOW THE RISKS:

Explore Options and Possible Alternatives to Surgery

☐ **Try to go to all doctor visits** with your loved one.

☐ **Help your loved one prepare a good list of topics** to cover with every doctor consulted, starting with your loved one's goals and priorities! Examples to consider:

- "Wellness wishes"—your loved one's vision, hopes and priorities for quality of life after surgery (or any alternative treatment that might be offered)
- Concerns or fears about the recommended surgery
- The pros and cons of the recommended surgery

☐ **Some questions to consider asking:**

- Is surgery the only choice?
- What are some alternatives to surgery?

  (For every alternative), what are the results compared to surgery?
- What if I put off surgery for awhile? (Pros and cons?)
- What if I decided not to have this surgery at all? (Pros and cons?)
- What are my costs for surgery (and any alternative treatment options)?
- What if I can't afford surgery or other treatments
- How do I know what my insurance will cover?
- How much time would I miss from work?
- Would I need to have help at home during recovery?*
- What would my medications cost?
- Would I need physical or occupational therapy? Wound care?
- What resources are available to help with costs?

☐ **Urge your loved one to ask as many questions**—of as many doctors—as needed in order to feel comfortable making a decision.

Use our "How-To" Checklist for planning help during your loved one's recovery.

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YOUR LOGO

Planned surgery allows time for planned conversations! *Often, patients don't realize they have a choice of doctors to perform any recommended surgery. Every surgery carries risk, so taking the time to find a surgeon who is skilled and follows best practices to minimize risk is a rewarding investment of time.*

A Care Partner is critical for helping loved ones *find the best doctor, hospital, and date for surgery. Why? It can be an exhausting process…just when a patient is likely feeling down and worried about their health. Your caring help means the world!*

Follow the suggestions on our "How-To" Checklists *to help explore surgery options and help your loved one make final decisions using these questions on this page for further conversations with doctors.*

The more information you help your loved one collect, the greater peace of mind will result. *And that's worth everyone's time!*

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HOW TO HELP

CHOOSE A SURGEON, HOSPITAL, AND A DATE FOR SURGERY

MINIMIZE RISKS! Help your loved one interview potential surgeons regarding the most critical concerns. Be sure to take good notes!

- ☐ **What are the potential complications with my surgery?**
  - If infection isn't mentioned—always a risk!
- ☐ **How many of these surgeries have you personally performed?**
  - If not hundreds or thousands
- ☐ **Do you use a checklist in your OR (operating room) before starting surgery?**
  - If the answer is NO. The practice of using a checklist confirms the right patient, right procedure, and all vital medical details.

- ☐ **Does the surgical team introduce themselves in the OR before starting a surgery?**
  - If the answer is NO. Studies show that teams who know each other's names have better communication during surgery, and better results.
- ☐ **When is an antibiotic given prior to surgery?**
  - If not within 60 minutes before surgery starts.
- ☐ **Do you screen for MRSA and Covid prior to surgery?**
  - If NO for either. (Patients can ask for these tests, however.)

MORE QUESTIONS FOR SURGEONS THAT COULD BE HELPFUL FOR YOUR LOVED ONE.

- ☐ **Can we schedule surgery mid-week?** Are you planning a vacation or time off? Surgeries mid-week means your surgeon is more likely to be available in case of complications afterward.
- ☐ **How is your hospital rated for safety and quality?** (Look up at *Hospital Safety Grade and Hospital Compare.*)
- ☐ **Who would actually perform my operation?** You alone, or will you have assistants?
- ☐ **If assistants participate,** how many of these surgeries have they done?

- ☐ **If assistants are medical students/residents,** what would they do in my surgery? (Patients may state a preference on these practices.)
- ☐ **Will you be performing or supervising any other surgeries during mine?** (Patients may state a preference on these practices.)

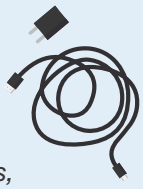
YOUR LOGO

Pack a tote with items for your loved one and yourself:

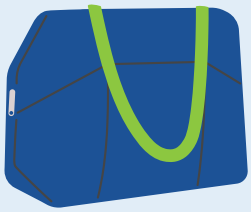
- ☐ *A warm sweater, sweatshirt, scarf, hat— hospitals have chilly areas. (It's okay to ask for a blanket for yourself and your loved one!)*
- ☐ *Antibacterial hand cleaner.*
- ☐ *Notebook and pen for taking notes.*

- ☐ *Your loved one's patient portal login and password, plus any other health records medical providers may need.*
- ☐ *Headphones for music, books, and videos on your personal devices.*

- ☐ *Device chargers!*



- ☐ *Books, magazines, and puzzles.*



HOW TO HELP

YOUR LOVED ONE PREPARE FOR SURGERY:

- ☐ **Read the surgeon's pre-surgery instructions.** Help make sure your loved one follows these instructions "to a T!"

- ☐ **Ask if pre-surgery supplies or medications are needed.** Help or remind your loved one to buy/use these items to prep for surgery.
- ☐ **For 2 to 3 days before surgery,** ensure your loved one showers with liquid antibacterial soap that contains **CHLORHEXIDINE**. This special soap removes bacteria from the skin that can cause infection. Help make sure your loved one understands the instructions for using the soap—so important for the soap to work!
- ☐ **Keep your loved one warm.** In cold weather, warm up the car first. Make sure their hair is dry. Bring an extra sweater or other soft, warm clothing. Hospitals have some very chilly areas!
- ☐ **Fill out a Medication Record** with your loved one. Bring it to the hospital with all of your loved one's current medications.

- ☐ **Prepare to stay with your loved one 24/7 while hospitalized.** Use our handy "How-To" Checklists so you will know how to help during their hospital stay.
- ☐ **It's okay to organize "shifts"** with other family members and friends. Be sure to tell them about our Hospital Stay Checklists, too!

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YOUR LOGO

DETAILS TO KNOW & DOCUMENTS TO BRING!

- ☐ Photo ID of your loved one
- ☐ Insurance card(s)
- ☐ **Up-to-date list of medications,** including vitamins, herbs, and non-prescription medicines
- ☐ **Record of any alcohol, tobacco and recreational drug use** (No one will judge. For safe care, doctors need to know everything that's in your loved one's system.)
- ☐ **List of recent shots and vaccinations,** with dates
- ☐ Medical Power of Attorney,
- ☐ Advance Directive,
- ☐ List of doctors who treat your loved one, and their contact info,
- ☐ Our handy **"How-To" Checklists** for patients' Care Partners.

GOOD COMMUNICATION IS GOOD FOR EVERYONE!

Is your loved one hearing-, sight-, or speech-impaired? Speak another language? Please let all medical providers know so they can take special care when communicating with your loved one.

HOW TO HELP

ON THE DAY OF SURGERY:

DETAILS TO CONFIRM UPON CHECK-IN:

- ☐ Your loved one's name.
- ☐ Type of surgery.
- ☐ Any special communication needs due to hearing, speech, or language differences.
- ☐ Current medications.
- ☐ Allergies.
- ☐ Last time your loved one had anything to eat or drink.
- ☐ How long the surgery is expected to take.
- ☐ If you can expect updates during the surgery.
- ☐ The possibility of providing additional oxygen for your loved one after surgery.

CONFIRM THE SURGICAL TEAM WILL:

- ☐ Take a "Time Out" or "Huddle" just before the surgery to confirm your loved one's medical details.
- ☐ Introduce team members to each other.
- ☐ Use a surgical checklist.
- ☐ Clip (don't shave) hair that may need to be removed.
- ☐ Give an antibiotic. (Who is responsible? What time?)
- ☐ Review your loved one's medications, allergies, and any other special conditions, such as any hearing, speech, or language differences.
- ☐ Keep your loved one warm to protect their immune system!

REMEMBER, IT'S OKAY TO SPEAK UP!

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YOUR LOGO

Care Partners monitor monitors! *Immediately after surgery, your loved one will still be asleep and transferred to a recovery area to gradually wake up.*

Any surgery is a shock to the system, *so this is a critical time to monitor the after-effects. Most patients are put on electronic medical monitoring devices ... but these are not always perfect. So, sit beside your loved one and think of yourself as a monitor, too.*

Notice anything that doesn't seem right? *Get a nurse right away! They will be grateful for your extra watchful eyes and ears on their patient.*

HOW TO HELP

IMMEDIATELY AFTER SURGERY:

Care Partner, you are the extra layer in the safety net all great hospitals want for their patients.

- ☐ **Wait in the hospital during surgery** and sit beside your loved one in the recovery area.
- ☐ **Make sure your loved one is warm.** It's okay to ask for an extra blanket or even two!
- ☐ **Follow up** on any post-surgery antibiotics
- ☐ **Ask the surgeon:** *Were there complications during surgery?*

  (If so, ask:) *"What were they?"*
- ☐ **Ask that a copy of the surgery notes** be included in your loved one's electronic medical record.
- ☐ **Begin planning for recovery care** at home with our helpful "How-To" Checklists.

GET A NURSE DURING RECOVERY IF:

- ☐ A monitor alarm goes off.
- ☐ Your loved one shows signs of or complains about:
  - Chills, shivering.
  - Nausea.
  - Vomiting.
  - Choking.
  - Any struggle for breath.
  - Headache, confusion.
  - Pain.

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Nothing in life prepares your patients and their loved ones to manage a serious illness. Safe & Sound™ resources express your empathy and commitment to care that meets patients where they are.

Together, you are prepared to partner for patient-centered care.

Ready to partner for patients? Let's talk!

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