

# New Mexico VA Health Care System



Pre-Operative  
Surgical  
Information

Your surgery is scheduled on:

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# Day before Surgery

You will receive a phone call from the surgery unit in the afternoon (Friday if your surgery is on a Monday):



- Confirming what time to check in for your surgery (Ambulatory Surgical Unit on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor or ASU – 3D).
- Everything is done to see that your surgery starts on time. Sometimes delays are unavoidable – the staff will keep you and your family informed.
- Reviewing with you what medications to take tomorrow before your surgery (see page 11).
- Reviewing your eating and drinking instructions before your surgery (see page 11).

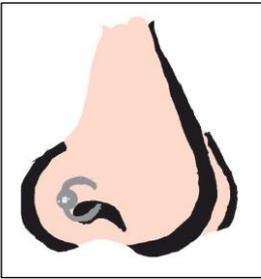


- We encourage you to take a bath or shower the night before surgery.
- If you have been given special soap from the clinic, please follow the directions.
- **Please!** Do NOT shave any areas of your body near where the surgery is being done.

# Day of Surgery

**Hygiene:** Taking a bath or shower is OK!

- **NO** Makeup
- **NO** Lotion
- **NO** Deodorant
- **NO** Perfume or Aftershave
- **NO** Nail Polish



**Don't** Wear Jewelry or Body Piercings – they might burn you during surgery.



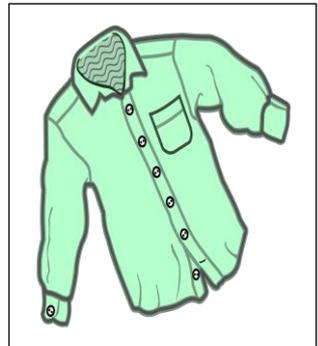
**NO Contacts!**  
Please wear your glasses



**NO Candy or Gum**  
before surgery

Wear comfortable clothing if you are going home:

- Consider if the clothes will fit over a large dressing or a cast after surgery.
- A shirt that buttons in front is best.



# Day of Surgery



## Don't Forget:

- Bring your VA Card with you!



- Also bring a list of the medications you took this morning.

## Going Home After ?



- You must have a driver to take you home.
- A person needs to be with you for 24 hours after having Anesthesia/Surgery.
- Bring your Oxygen! You will need it to go home.
- Bring any medical devices that have been given to you for your operation.
  - Crutches (leave them in the car to get home)
  - Splints or Slings
  - Wheelchair
  - Cane



# Staying Overnight in the Hospital?

**NO** Valuables please!  
Keep your money and jewelry at home.



Medications from home cannot be used when in the hospital. Please let your nurse know if you have them with you.

The doctors and nurses will be getting you to move and walk soon after surgery

- This is good for your:
  - Lungs
  - Circulation
  - Bowels



You will be asked to do deep breathing exercises – this will help reduce your risk of pneumonia.

# Staying Overnight in the Hospital?

## Washing Hands!



Everybody (Hospital Staff and Visitors) should wash their hands when coming into your room. This is the best way to prevent spreading of germs that could make you sick or get an infection.

## Pain Control!

After surgery it is normal to have some pain. Usually your surgical pain is most severe during your first couple of days. Your doctors will prescribe pain medications to help. The nurses will ask you for a number to describe how much pain you are in.



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No Pain



1 - 2

Mild Pain



3 - 4

Moderate Pain



5 - 6

Severe Pain



7 - 8

Very Severe  
Pain



9 - 10

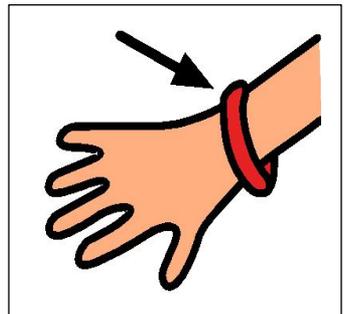
Worst  
Possible Pain

# Your Safety! Our Priority! Speak Up!



All the staff here at the VA have the responsibility to keep you safe from harm. There are steps we will take to assure this happens:

- You will be asked many times to identify yourself with your ID band on your wrist:
  - Name
  - Date of birth
  - Social security number and...
  - What type of surgery you will be having
- Staff will make sure the surgical consent for your surgery matches the operation scheduled.
- The surgical team will identify where on your body the operation will take place either by:
  - Placing a mark on your body where they plan to operate.
  - or
  - Placing an ID band on your wrist with the location of where the operation is to be done.



# General Information

## Preventing Infections!

There are many ways we all can help prevent infections in the hospital:

- Everyone **MUST** wash their hands!  
Doctors, Nurses, Technicians,  
Housekeepers, Family, and Friends.
- Tobacco increases your risk of infection. Try to stop or at least cut back.
- If you are feeling sick days prior to your scheduled operation:
  - Call your surgical team and let them know.
  - It may be better to postpone your surgery than being sick during your operation. Contact your doctor or clinic.
- **No** new tattoos before your surgery – especially near your operation site.
- Call your surgeon if you have a rash or infection near where the operation is to take place.
- You may be asked to wash with special soap the night before – follow the instructions from the clinic.



# General Information

## Anesthesia

The anesthesia department will assure that you are safe and comfortable during your surgery.

There can be different ways to assure that your pain is at a reasonable level:



- Pain Medications – You will most likely receive pain medications during and after your surgery.
- Nerve Blocks – Sometimes medicine may be injected around nerves near where the operation is to be done. This can reduce the amount of pain after surgery.
- Spinal Anesthesia – Injection of medicine in the lower back can allow surgeries to be done from the waist down.
- General Anesthesia – The anesthesia team will administer medications through your IV. This will cause a deep sleep with a breathing tube placed afterwards



On the day of surgery, the anesthesia team will help you choose the best anesthesia for you and the type of operation you are having.

# Important Information!

## Medicine Instructions:

### Take the morning of surgery:

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### Don't Take the morning of surgery:

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### Continue to take:

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### Medications to Stop:

If on ASA, NSAIDS or  
Anticoagulants

**No eating after midnight**  
**No drinking after midnight**  
**(Except sips of water with medications)**

**Contact Phone Numbers:**  
**Ambulatory Surgical Unit (ASU)**  
**(505) 265-1711 ext 4235**  
**(800) 465-8262 ext 4235**

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