



Enhanced Recovery for Spine Surgery

A GUIDE TO PREPARING FOR YOUR PROCEDURE

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What to Expect

You and your doctor have decided you need surgery. This booklet will help you understand what to expect before, during and after your procedure.

Your healthcare team features many different people working together to provide care. This includes fellowship trained surgeons, board certified doctors, and compassionate nurses, dietitians, care managers, social workers and other health professionals across multiple disciplines.

Your care plan will address your individual medical needs with industry best practices, clinical protocols and evidence-based guidelines.

Part of your care plan includes an enhanced recovery approach for surgery, designed to improve recovery. This allows for more effective pain management, fewer complications, and increased communication and collaboration.

Many patients are pleased to learn the enhanced recovery approach includes:

- Liquids before surgery: You can have clear liquids up to four hours before surgery.
- An earlier start to pain control: Pain after surgery will be managed by giving pain relievers before or during surgery. This will increase the amount of medication in your blood and make you more comfortable after surgery.
- A faster return to eating: You can start eating and drinking easy-to-digest food and liquids after surgery.
- Post-surgery activity: After surgery, you will spend several hours a day up in a chair or walking in the hall.
- A shorter hospital stay: Before going home, your pain will be controlled so you can return to many of the activities you enjoy.

The Month Before Surgery

Being your healthiest before surgery will help with recovery.

HERE ARE A FEW WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR HEALTH:

Start walking.

It's important to be up and active after surgery. Activity will help prevent blood clots and pneumonia. If you don't already exercise daily, now's a good time to start. Walking now will make it easier for you to reach daily goals after surgery.

Walking can also help you emotionally prepare for surgery. Walking with a friend or family member is a good time to talk about concerns you may have about surgery. If you're just starting to exercise, try to walk five minutes the first day. Increase the length and frequency until you're walking 10 minutes, three times a day.

Stop smoking.

Smoking increases your risk of breathing problems. You won't be allowed to smoke in the hospital, and that can be physically and emotionally stressful. We have resources to help you decrease or quit smoking. If you'd like help, ask your doctor or nurse for more information.

Decrease alcohol consumption.

If you regularly consume alcohol, now's a good time to stop. Drinking alcohol can increase the amount of time it takes your blood to clot. It also increases your risk of other bleeding problems.

Control blood sugar.

Elevated blood sugar can slow the healing process. If you have diabetes or prediabetes, talk to your primary care provider to make sure your blood sugar is in good control before surgery.

PAPERWORK

Before you come in for surgery, you may need to complete paperwork for your insurance, employer or caregiver.

Carle Patient Financial Services can assist you with the following paperwork:

- Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).
- Short-term disability insurance.
- Major medical policies.
- Supplemental medical policies.
- Advance directives.

If any form requires a doctor's signature, Patient Financial Services will route the paperwork to your surgeon. You'll be notified when the papers are ready for pickup. If the paperwork needs to be sent directly to your employer, Patient Financial Services will notify you when it's been sent.

Help Before and After Surgery

Now's a good time to think about what kind of help you might need before and after your surgery.

Here are some questions to think about:

- Who'll take you to the hospital?
- Who'll be with you during the recovery period?
- Who'll bring you home?
- Who'll be with you after you get home?
- Is there someone to help you with chores like laundry, housework, grocery shopping or yardwork?
- How will you spend your time after surgery to stay busy? Whether you choose to read a book, knit, or complete math or word puzzles, it's best to get these items ahead of time.

If you have trouble finding help, Carle social workers may be able to assist you with finding resources.

Timelines, Tasks and Goals

It can be overwhelming to remember everything.

To help you and your caregivers, we've put together a checklist to guide you through preparing for your procedure. We've included goals and guidelines throughout the surgical and recovery process.

THE WEEK BEFORE SURGERY

- ☐ Complete preoperative physical.
- ☐ Ask a loved one to help you gather things you might need after surgery, like:
 - A thermometer.
 - A bottle acetaminophen: 500 mg tablets (Tylenol®).
 - A glucose meter (if you have diabetes).
 - Chewing gum.
 - Protein drinks (Ensure®, Boost®, Glucerna®, Premier Protein®).
 - Noncarbonated beverages (juice, sports drink).
 - Easy-to-prepare soft foods, like yogurt, rice, bananas and soups.
- ☐ Pack your hospital bag, including comfortable clothes to wear during your stay. Suggestions include sweatpants and a loose shirt.
- ☐ Don't use a razor on your neck or body for 72 hours before surgery. You may shave your face, but not your neck or below.
- ☐ Plan ahead so you have clean sheets for your bed and clean pajamas. You'll need these fresh, clean items for the night before surgery.
- ☐ Purchase Hibiclens® liquid soap in the first-aid aisle of any local drug store. You'll need to bathe with it the day before surgery.

THE DAY BEFORE SURGERY

Diet

- You don't need a clear-liquid diet.

Bathing

- Don't use a razor on your neck or body for 72 hours before surgery. You may shave your face, but not your neck or below.
- You'll need to shower the night before and the morning of surgery using 4% chlorhexidine (Hibiclens) liquid soap. You can buy the soap at any local drug store in the first-aid section.
- Wash with soap starting from the neck down, including armpits, groin, back and feet. Apply the soap with hands or clean washcloth. Allow soap to stay on skin for one minute before rinsing off. Your skin may feel slightly sticky.
- After you shower, don't sleep with pets and don't let them lay on or with you.
- After you shower, wear freshly laundered pajamas and sleep on fresh bed sheets.
- Don't apply lotions, powders, deodorant, perfume or makeup the day of surgery.
- Wear clean, loose-fitting clothing the day you report for surgery.

DAY OF SURGERY

- On the morning of your surgery, shower the same way as the night before, using the Hibiclens soap.
- Drink one large or two small Ensure Clear drinks, three hours before the scheduled surgery.
- After you finish your protein drinks, take two 500 mg tablets of acetaminophen with water.
Any medication you need to take the morning of your surgery must be taken at least three hours before surgery.
They must be taken with your water or Ensure Clear protein drink.
- Don't apply lotions, powders, perfumes or makeup the day of surgery.
- Wear clean, loose-fitting clothing to report for surgery.
- Bring a list of your medications, including dose(s) and times you take them.

EVENING OF SURGERY

Goals

- ☐ Spend at least two hours out of bed this evening.
- ☐ Work on breathing exercises, using your incentive spirometer at least 10 times every hour you're awake.
- ☐ You can drink as soon as you'd like after surgery. A few hours after that, you may be able to eat a regular diet. Small amounts are best rather than a large meal. Stop eating if you feel full or nauseous.
- ☐ Regularly scheduled acetaminophen will be given. Your care team will check on you regularly to discuss comfort and concerns.

FIRST DAY AFTER SURGERY

Goals

- ☐ Sit up in the chair for meals.
- ☐ Stand up and walk or move about at least three times.
- ☐ Drink protein drinks as instructed by your surgeon.
- ☐ Urinate after catheter is removed.

SECOND DAY AFTER SURGERY (AND FOR THE REST OF YOUR STAY)

Goals

- ☐ Sit up in the chair for meals.
- ☐ Stand up and walk or move about at least three times.
- ☐ Drink protein drinks as instructed by your surgeon.
- ☐ Learn how to give blood-thinning shots (enoxaparin/Lovenox®), if needed.

Before you can go home, you must:

- ☐ Be eating and drinking a light diet.
- ☐ Walk in the hall.
- ☐ Have your pain controlled.
- ☐ Not have a fever.
- ☐ Pass gas.

GOING HOME AFTER SURGERY

Activity

- After you leave the hospital, you should maintain a certain level of activity. Your risk of blood clots doesn't go away once you go home.
- You need to keep up with your deep-breathing exercises. Please take your incentive spirometer home with you.
- No lifting greater than 10 – 15 pounds for six weeks.
- Some medications may affect your ability to think clearly, drive or operate machinery. Avoid driving for at least the first week after surgery or until your follow-up visit.
- It's normal to feel tired. You may need to take naps or rest during the day.
- You may walk flights of stairs, perform activities that don't take much energy, ride in a car and shower.
- Continue to walk frequently and increase your stamina.

Diet

- Small, frequent meals may be more easily tolerated after surgery. Avoid large meals.
- Drink plenty of fluids. Avoid caffeine, alcohol and fluids with high sugar content because they can cause increased urination, diarrhea and dehydration. Water, Crystal Light® and/or sports drinks are good choices. Sugar-free or low-sugar sports drinks are better.

Incisions

- Wash your incision(s) every day with soap and water. Do NOT use peroxide on your wounds unless your surgeon tells you to.
- You may have some clear, yellow or bloody drainage from your incision. It will usually increase as your activity increases. It should last a couple days and then go away.
- You may see some redness along the edge of your incision. This is normal. But if you have an elevated temperature, your incision becomes warm and/or the red color begins to spread, call your surgeon's office.
- If you have staples, they'll be removed at your first post-op visit. Some surgeons will apply little strips of tape to the incisions. You can remove the strips at home after one week.
- If your temperature is 101°F or higher and acetaminophen won't lower it after 12 hours, please call the office.
- Unless told otherwise, you may shower. Do NOT take baths, sit in a hot tub or swim until your surgeon gives you the OK.

- The incision doesn't need to be covered. If there's a small amount of drainage, cover the area with gauze to protect your clothing and prevent rubbing.
- If you notice thick, dark yellow drainage; smelly drainage; or see redness at or around the incision (like a spreading sunburn), call your surgeon's office. These may be signs of infection.
- Most healing takes place by six weeks after surgery. The scar will continue to soften, and the skin will become lighter in color over the next year.
- Keep your incision covered from sunlight for the first few months, or use sunscreen to protect your newly healed skin from sunburn.
- Your care team will discuss when it's safe to resume certain activities.

Pain Control

- Pain from the incision is normal. The pain will vary with activity, but should decrease over time.
- Mild abdominal cramps and bloating are normal. This should improve slowly. Eating several small meals instead of a few large meals will help prevent bloating. Walking before and after meals will also help.
- Many pain medications can cause constipation. Drink plenty of fluids and take stool softeners and/or laxatives as instructed. Stop taking stool softeners if you start having loose stools.
- Take your medication as prescribed.
- Some medications may affect your ability to think clearly, drive or operate machinery. Don't drive or drink alcohol until your provider says it's safe to do so.
- Acetaminophen (Tylenol) is also an excellent pain reliever for minor pain. Don't take acetaminophen while taking Percocet® or Norco®, or other medications that contain acetaminophen. Taking more than 4,000 mg of acetaminophen in 24 hours can cause severe liver damage.
- If your pain becomes progressively worse, or if you develop nausea and vomiting, call your surgeon's office.

Bowel Movements

- After surgery, your bowel movements might not be regular. You may have loose stools or constipation. Your surgeon may send you home with medicine or ways to help with these problems.
- Your first bowel movement may not happen for up to four days after surgery.
- If you haven't had a bowel movement after four days, take a laxative. If you don't get results, please call the office.

Medications

- Federal laws don't allow for some medicines to be called in to a pharmacy. Instead, you must pick up a signed prescription from our office. Your doctor will tell you if this applies to you. Please allow two business days for refills.
- For the first couple days, continue to take the recommended dosage of medication containing acetaminophen (Tylenol).

Follow-Up Appointments

- You'll get a phone call from the clinic after discharge to schedule a follow-up appointment. If you don't receive a call within a few days, please call the office to schedule an appointment.
- You'll have additional follow-up appointments with your care team after surgery.

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, call Carle Patient Advisory Services at (217) 383-3233. Available after office hours, including weekends.

Notes

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Notes

DISCRIMINATION IS AGAINST THE LAW.

Carle Health complies with applicable Federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex. Carle Health does not exclude people or treat them differently because of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex.

Carle Health provides free aids and services to people with disabilities to communicate effectively with us, such as:

- Qualified sign language interpreters
- Written information in other formats (*large print, audio, accessible electronic formats*)

Carle Health provides free language services to people whose primary language is not English, such as:

- Qualified interpreters
- Information written in other languages.

If you need these services, contact Carle interpreter services at (217) 326-0340.

If you believe that Carle Health has failed to provide these services or discriminated in another way on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex, you can file a grievance with: Carle Patient Relations at (217) 326-8560 or toll free (855) 665-8252, by email at patient.relations@carle.com or by mail at Carle Health, Attention: Patient Relations, 611 W. Park Street, Urbana, IL 61801. If you need help filing a grievance, Patient Relations is available to help you, M-F 8am-5pm. You can also file a civil rights complaint with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights, electronically through the Office for Civil Rights Complaint Portal, available at <https://ocrportal.hhs.gov/ocr/portal/lobby.jsf>, or by mail or phone at: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 200 Independence Avenue, SW Room 509F, HHH Building, Washington, D.C. 20201, (800) 368-1019 or (800) 537-7697 (TDD). Complaint forms are available at <http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/office/file/index.html>.

SPANISH

ATENCIÓN: Si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al 1-217-383-2543.

CHINESE (MANDARIN)

注意: 如果您使用繁體中文, 您可以免費獲得語言援助服務。請致電 1-217-383-2545.

VIETNAMESE

CHÚ Ý: Nếu bạn nói Tiếng Việt, có các dịch vụ hỗ trợ ngôn ngữ miễn phí dành cho bạn. Gọi số 1-217-383-2546.

KOREAN

주의: 한국어를 사용하시는 경우, 언어 지원 서비스를 무료로 이용하실 수 있습니다. 1-217-383-2547 번으로 전화해 주십시오.

TAGALOG

PAUNAWA: Kung nagsasalita ka ng Tagalog, maaari kang gumamit ng mga serbisyo ng tulong sa wika nang walang bayad. Tumawag sa 1-217-326-0340.

RUSSIAN

ВНИМАНИЕ: Если вы говорите на русском языке, то вам доступны бесплатные услуги перевода. Звоните 1-217-326-0340.

ARABIC

ملحوظة: إذا كنت تتحدث اذكر اللغة، فإن خدمات المساعدة اللغوية تتوافر لك بالمجان. اتصل برقم 1-217-326-0340

FRENCH

ATTENTION: Si vous parlez français, des services d'aide linguistique vous sont proposés gratuitement. Appelez le 1-217-383-2544.

POLISH

UWAGA: Jeżeli mówisz po polsku, możesz skorzystać z bezpłatnej pomocy językowej. Zadzwoń pod numer 1-217-326-0340.

ITALIAN

ATTENZIONE: In caso la lingua parlata sia l'italiano, sono disponibili servizi di assistenza linguistica gratuiti. Chiamare il numero 1-217-326-0340.

GERMAN

ACHTUNG: Wenn Sie Deutsch sprechen, stehen Ihnen kostenlos sprachliche Hilfsdienstleistungen zur Verfügung. Rufnummer: 1-217-326-0340.

HINDI

ध्यान दें: यदि आप हिंदी बोलते हैं तो आपके लिए मुफ्त में भाषा सहायता सेवाएं उपलब्ध हैं। 1-217-326-0340. पर कॉल करें।

GUJARATI

સુચના: જો તમે ગુજરાતી બોલતા હો, તો નિ:શુલ્ક ભાષા સહાય સેવાઓ તમારા માટે ઉપલબ્ધ છે. ફોન કરો 1-217-326-0340.

URDU

خبردار: اگر آپ اردو بولتے ہیں، تو آپ کو زبان کی مدد کی خدمات مفت میں دستیاب ہیں۔ کال کریں 1-217-326-0340

GREEK

ΠΡΟΣΟΧΗ: Αν μιλάτε ελληνικά, στη διάθεσή σας βρίσκονται υπηρεσίες γλωσσικής υποστήριξης, οι οποίες παρέχονται δωρεάν. Καλέστε 1-217-326-0340.

