

Questions to ask before your surgery

Surgery, no matter how minor, is a big deal. Go into it with a full understanding of the plan and how it may impact your health and lifestyle.

What procedure will be performed?

Ask your health care provider to explain the procedure clearly, listing all the steps involved, including what type of anesthesia will be used and who will deliver it.

What are the benefits? How long do they last?

Have your provider outline the specific benefits to having the surgery. You also want to know how long they last – some might last a lifetime, while others might last a short time before needing more treatment.

Why is this surgery needed? What happens if I don't get it?

Find out what problem or problems the surgery is intended to fix and if there are negative impacts for not going through with it.

What are the risks?

Every surgery carries some level of risk. Find out what complications are possible.

Are there alternatives available?

There may be ways to treat your condition or symptoms with a non-surgical approach, like medication or therapy. Or there might be a less-invasive surgery option.

Do you recommend I get a second opinion? From whom?

Health care providers typically have a list of people to whom they can refer you for a second opinion and are happy to help you seek one out. Some insurances even require a second opinion for certain elective surgeries.



What is your experience performing this surgery?

You may want to reduce your risks for complications by choosing a provider who is well trained and has a lot of experience performing the kind of surgery you need.

What should I expect recovery to be like?

Ask your provider to describe what to expect in the first hours, days, weeks and even months after surgery.

How much will I have to pay for this surgery?

Your health care provider likely doesn't know this information. But someone on the staff might be able to help you with this information. You may need to call your health insurance company for cost information.

Do I need to get prior authorization from my insurance or does the doctor handle that?

Try to get answers to any and all financial concerns, so you aren't surprised when a bill shows up in the mail.
