

Preparing for your surgery and admission at The Ottawa Hospital

Disclaimer

This patient education resource is not medical advice. It shares common health facts, advice and tips. Some of the information provided in this resource may not apply to you. Please talk to your doctor, nurse or other health-care team member to see if this information will work for you. They can also answer any questions or concerns that you might have.

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Welcome to The Ottawa Hospital (TOH). We understand that surgery can be a stressful time for you and your loved ones. Please read this booklet carefully and share it with your care partners (individuals who you wish to involve in your care). Make sure to ask your health provider as many questions as you need to. Understanding how to prepare for your surgery will help you to get more involved in your care.

What you can do to prepare for your surgery

Your Pre-Admission Unit (PAU) visit

You will have an appointment at the Pre-Admission Unit (PAU) several days or weeks before your surgery. This appointment may be in person at the hospital or virtual (done over the phone or a computer). You will be seen by a nurse and/or an anesthesiologist (doctor that has special training in giving you medications to keep you safe and comfortable during your surgery). The PAU team will ask you questions to learn more about you and your health. This information will help the health-care team to plan your care. Please **bring all of your medications** to your PAU appointment. This includes your over-the-counter medications, prescription creams, eye drops, inhalers, and herbal remedies (vitamins, supplements, etc.).

Your activity before surgery

It is important to prepare your body for surgery by being physically active. This can help to speed up your recovery. If you are able, here are some recommended activities:

- ✓ Maintain or increase your daily activity (e.g., walking for longer periods of time than usual).
- ✓ Stretching, balancing, and mobility exercises.
- ✓ Doing deep breathing and coughing exercises several times an hour (while you are awake).

Smoking


We recommend that you stop smoking before surgery. Patients who smoke are more at risk of getting infections or experiencing serious heart and lung

problems during and after surgery. At a minimum, you must not smoke on the day of your surgery.

- ❑ If you are interested in quitting smoking, the Ottawa Model for Smoking Cessation's (OMSC) **free support** services can help. Call 1-888-645-5405 to access these services.
- ❑ If you have questions about quitting smoking, you can call 1-888-645-5405 or e-mail omsc@ottawaheart.ca.

Alcohol

Drinking alcohol regularly before surgery may increase your risk of complications during and after surgery. It is recommended that you stop drinking alcohol at least 4 weeks before your surgery. This will help you to get better faster. Even if you are not able to stop drinking alcohol completely, reducing the amount of alcohol you drink in the 4 weeks before surgery will be helpful for your recovery.

 One standard drink	
341 mL (12 oz) of a 5% beer	One standard beer bottle or can
142 mL (5 oz) of a 12% wine	You will need to measure and mark on your wineglass
341 mL (12oz) of a 5% alcoholic cooler	One standard bottle or can
43 mL (1.5 oz) of a 40% liquor (i.e., gin, vodka, rum, rye, etc.)	Measuring using one shot glass or 3 tablespoons

If you usually drink 4 or more standard drinks per day and/or experience alcohol withdrawal symptoms like shaking, sweating, or feeling restless, do not stop drinking abruptly (suddenly). Follow these steps:

- Speak to your family doctor, nurse practitioner, or surgeon about the amount of alcohol that you drink.
- After speaking to the health-care team, you can also reach out to one of the following services who can help you to decrease the amount of alcohol that you drink:

- ✓ **Visit the AccessMHA.ca** website for free mental health and substance use support.
- ✓ **The government of Ontario's ConnexOntario services:**
Call 1-866-531-2600 or visit their website at <https://www.connexontario.ca/en-ca/> to chat with someone online or find services in your area.
- ✓ **Speak to someone from the Royal Hospital's Rapid Access to Addictions Medicine (RAAM) Clinic:** Visit their website at theroyal.accessraam.ca or call 613-722-6521 extension 6508.

Where to stay if you live far away

If you live far away from the hospital (e.g., more than 100km away), and your care partner(s) wish to stay close to the hospital, low cost overnight accommodations (places to stay) are available. Accommodations you can book a room at include:

- **The Rotel:** Visit www.rotel.ca or call 1-800-267-4700.
- **The Ottawa Hospital's Residence Corporation:** E-mail booking@rescorp.ca or call 855-366-3082.

How to plan for leaving the hospital after surgery

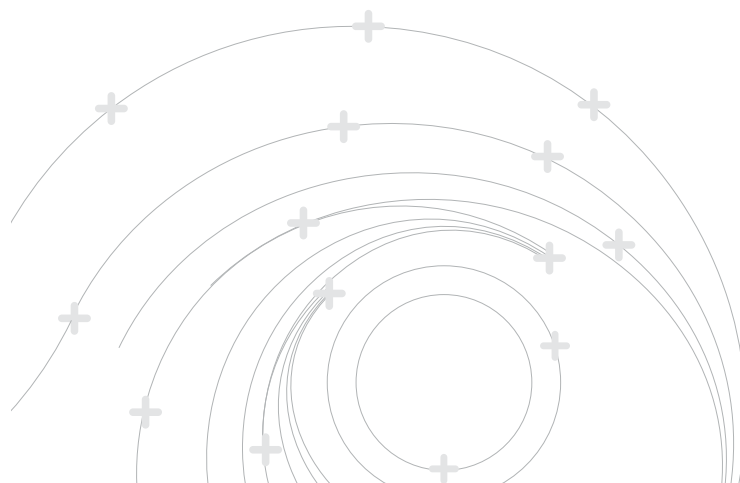
- You may **not** be able to drive after your surgery. Please arrange to have a ride.
- Fill your fridge, freezer, and cupboards with healthy pre-prepared foods.
- Plan for someone to help you with your everyday activities such as showering, dressing, going to the washroom, and making meals.
- You may also need help with driving, laundry, cleaning, paying bills, caring for pets, watering plants, bathing, and general self-care.



The resources below may also help you.

Agency	Description of services	Contact details
Meals on Wheels	Delivers pre-made meals to your home for a fee.	https://www.mealsonwheels-ottawa.org/ 613-233-2424
Ontario Health atHome	Offers in-home and community services to support your health and wellbeing (i.e., personal care). Note that you need to meet certain requirements to use these services.	https://ontariohealthathome.ca/region/champlain/ 613-745-5525
VHA Health and Home Support	Offers respite, personal care, meal planning and preparation, homemaking services, and transportation help for a fee*. *VHA is for people who are 65 years old or older only.	https://www.vhaottawa.ca/ 613-238-8420

Many more community services can be found by calling "211" or visiting the 211 website at <https://211ontario.ca/>. "211" is a free and confidential helpline.



If you would like to stay somewhere else other than your home for a short period of time after your surgery, you can look into private convalescence at a nearby Retirement Home. You will have to pay a fee for this. You can contact the retirement home of your choice to pre-arrange your stay. Ask to speak with their Director of Wellness and Marketing who will give you information about room availability and the services they offer.

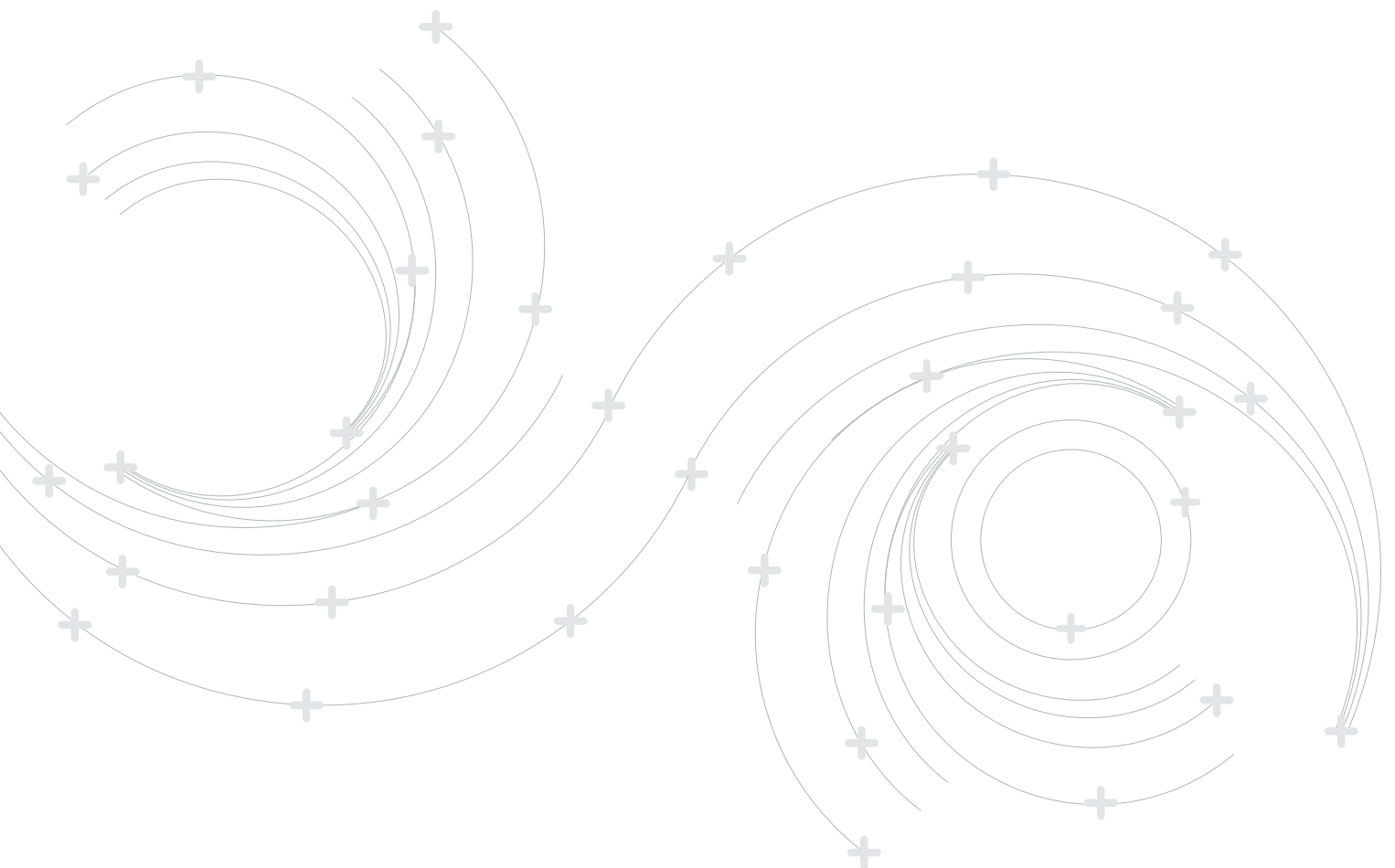
If you have any concerns about making these arrangements, or your ability to care for yourself after surgery, please reach out to your surgeon's office. They may be able to recommend other resources.

What if my health changes before I have my surgery

If your health changes before the day of your surgery, or you have concerns about your health in relation to your surgery, **call your surgeon's office.**

Cancellations

If you need to cancel or reschedule your surgery, please **call your surgeon's office at least 2 weeks before your scheduled surgery date** or as soon as possible.



The day before your surgery

Hospital staff will call you the day before your surgery. They will let you know where to go and what time to arrive at. It is important to note the location where you will have your surgery. Your surgeon will tell you which campus you will be having surgery at: The Civic, General or Riverside campus.

The table below tells you what time you will be called the day before your surgery and where to go on the day of your surgery.

Civic Campus	General Campus	Riverside Campus
Will call you between: 12:30-5pm	Will call you between: 3-6pm	Will call you between: 1-5pm
If you have not received a call or message within this time frame, please call:		
613-761-4718	613-737-8200	613-738-8531
Coming for surgery: Come to the Surgical Day Care Unit Reception Desk on the 3rd floor in section 'D'. The room number is 302.	Coming for surgery: Come to the Surgical Day Care Unit Reception desk on the 2nd floor in the Critical Care Wing.	Coming for surgery: Come to the Surgical Day Care Unit on the main floor. The room number is C200.

My surgeon's name: _____

My surgeon's office phone number: _____

The campus where my surgery will take place: _____

The time I am to arrive for my surgery: _____

Your surgeon will tell you if you are being admitted to the hospital, what type of unit you will be admitted to after surgery (e.g., inpatient ward or intensive care unit), and how long your hospital stay should last.

Eating and drinking before surgery

The night before your surgery you can eat and drink normally until midnight (12:00am) unless your surgeon tells you otherwise.

The day of your surgery



Important reminders

- ✓ Please come to the hospital with only one adult visitor.
- ✓ Bring the telephone number of the person you would like the surgeon to contact once your surgery is done.
- ✗ Do not bring any valuable items (e.g., money, credit cards, jewelry) to the hospital. If you decide to bring any valuables with you, TOH cannot accept any responsibility for the damage or loss of these items.

Eating and drinking on the day of surgery

- ✗ **Do not** eat food, chew gum, drink non-clear fluids, or suck on hard candy after midnight (12:00am) before your surgery.
- ✓ You can have clear fluids up to 90 minutes (1 ½ hours) before you come to the hospital for your surgery. Clear fluids can help to speed up your recovery.
- ✓ **Unless instructed otherwise**, drink at least 2 cups (500mL) of clear fluids before your surgery.



Examples of clear fluids:

- ✓ Apple juice.
- ✓ White cranberry or white grape juice.
- ✓ Colourless soft drinks (i.e., Sprite, Ginger ale or 7-up).
- ✓ Colourless sport drinks (i.e., Gatorade or Powerade.)
- ✗ Not having an empty stomach increases your risks of serious complications and death during surgery. Your surgery may also be cancelled.

Taking your medications on the day of surgery

- ✓ During your PAU appointment, the health-care team will tell you how to take your medications on the day of your surgery.
- ✓ You can find instructions on how to take your medications on the After Visit Summary (AVS) that you get after your PAU appointment. The AVS will also be in your MyChart.
- ✓ It is important to take your morning medications as instructed by the PAU health-care team with small sips of water.

Your procedure may be cancelled if you do not follow the instructions given to you during your PAU appointment.

Preparing your body for surgery

- ✓ Take a shower or bath using unscented soap and wash your hair either the evening before or morning of your surgery.
- ✓ Remove all make-up, nail polish, body piercings and jewelry.
- ✓ Any jewelry or piercings that cannot be removed may need to be cut off at the hospital before your surgery.
- ✓ Remove contact lenses.
- ✗ **Do not** use scented products like perfumes, colognes or lotions.
- ✗ **Do not** shave the area of your body where you are having surgery unless your doctor tells you otherwise.



What to bring to the hospital

- Health care (OHIP) and insurance information.
- Your inhaler, insulin (diabetic medicine), nitroglycerin (nitro) spray and/or eye drops if you take them. **All other medications should be left at home unless otherwise instructed by your surgeon or anesthesiologist.**
- Your CPAP or other breathing machine if you have sleep apnea and use one.
- Loose and comfortable clothing (e.g., bathrobe and pyjamas).
- Non-slip slippers or shoes.
- A reusable cup or mug.
- Wear** your glasses, hearing aids, and/or dentures. Bring a case for your glasses, hearing aids and/or dentures as they will need to be removed before surgery. Your nurse will label these cases with your name.
- Any assistive devices (like a cane, splint or crutches) your surgeon has told you to have ready to use after surgery.
- Items to pass time while you are waiting like books, crossword puzzles, or your cell phone and charger.
- Two packs of chewing gum. Chewing gum can help you recover after your surgery.

Can my surgery be cancelled

Your surgery may be cancelled due to emergencies or other reasons. Hospital staff will let you know if your surgery needs to be delayed or cancelled. We understand that having your planned surgery delayed or cancelled can be very stressful and we truly appreciate your understanding if this happens.

Coming to the hospital

You must come to the Surgical Day Care Unit (SDCU) on time or your surgery may be cancelled. This is because our operating rooms run on a very strict schedule that we need to follow to make sure that everyone gets the care they need.

In the Surgical Day Care Unit (SDCU)

- After the clerk registers you, you will change into a hospital gown. Hospital staff will label your belongings with your name and keep them in the SDCU while you are having surgery.
- It takes time to prepare you for your surgery. You may have to wait 2 to 3 hours before your surgery starts.

In the Operating Room (OR)

- When the surgical team is ready for you, hospital staff will bring you from the SDCU to the operating room (OR).
- Visitors and family members are **not allowed** in the OR.
- You may have to wait in the hall for a few minutes before going into the room where your operation will take place.
- You will have a chance to speak to your nurse and anesthesiologist before your surgery.
- Once you are in the OR, the health-care team will complete a surgical safety checklist. They will check your name, your procedure, and any other important items related to your surgery.

In the Post Anesthetic Care Unit (PACU)

- Once your surgery is finished, you will be taken to the Post-Anesthetic Care Unit (PACU) on a stretcher by the surgical team. The PACU is also known as the recovery room.

- The PACU nurse will watch you closely and check your vital signs (i.e., blood pressure, heart rate, and breathing). This nurse will also make sure that your pain is kept under control. Tell your nurse if you are having pain.
- It is very important to start moving after your surgery. While you are in bed, you should do foot and ankle exercises. This helps to get the blood moving in your legs and lowers your chances of getting a blood clot.
- Your belongings will be brought to you in the PACU before you are taken to your inpatient surgical unit.

Moving to the inpatient surgical unit

- Following your stay in the PACU, hospital staff will take you to your inpatient bed on a stretcher.
- Your visitors may visit you on the inpatient unit. Ask the health-care team if the unit has any policies about visitors.

Leaving the hospital

- When you are ready to be discharged from the hospital, follow the discharge instructions from your surgeon and the health-care team.
- Before you leave the hospital, ask the health-care team if there are any medication prescriptions or important documents that you will need before you leave.
- If you have questions after leaving the hospital, call your surgeon's office. If it is an emergency, present to the nearest emergency department or call 911.



Where to go if you have more questions or need help?

Call your surgeon's office.



For more patient information please scan this QR code or visit :

<https://www.ottawahospital.on.ca/en/clinical-services/my-surgery/my-pre-admission-pau-appointment/>





Do you have any feedback about this education resource?

Is it welcoming and respectful of your background, culture, and identity? Your opinion is important to us. Please fill out this [survey](#) or contact the Patient Education team at patienteducation@toh.ca



Do you need this information in a different format?

Please tell a member of your health-care team so that they can provide you with this information in a format that works for you. This resource is available in English and in French. Cette ressource est disponible en anglais et en français.



Booklet information

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