

How to help yourself get ready for surgery

Coming to the hospital for surgery may cause worry or stress for you or members of your family and friends. Each person has his or her own questions, concerns, needs and ways to manage. Most people want some kind of support when they are having surgery. Friends and family often need more support than the patient before surgery. Here are some things to think about.

Learning about your surgery

Some people want to learn about the surgery.

They find this:

- Lowers stress
- Helps them know what to expect
- Helps them get their family and home ready

This is a good time to think about who can help you:

- Get ready for surgery
- Plan for your return home

Learning about the resources in your community

Some people find it helpful to talk to a hospital Social Worker to have a smooth return home. Most people do not need home care when they go home. A Social Worker will see you when you, your family, or members of the health care team have concerns about how you will manage at home.

The Social Worker may complete a referral to one or more of these programs in your community:

Respite Care

Some people need a few extra days to build up their strength and manage daily tasks such as washing and dressing. A short stay at a place such as St. Joseph's Villa, Central Park Lodge or other places in your town or city may help. This takes 2 to 3 days to arrange.

Meals on Wheels

This program offers 1 hot, full course meal a day brought to your home. You pay a fee for this service.

DARTS

DARTS can provide transportation for people who cannot manage public transit. SCRIPT allows you to use taxi services at lower rates. Talk to a member of the health care team about these services.

Homemaking

There are many ways to get homemaking services when someone needs this:

- Each region has an agency that provides this service to people that have limited income. A Social Worker needs to meet with you to talk about your finances and complete forms to apply.
- Integrated Homemaking is a program that may be offered where you live. This may include grocery shopping, light housework, getting meals ready and helping with personal care. If you think you may need help, ask to meet with the Social Worker before you go home.

Caregiver Support Program

The Social Worker can make a call or referral to give a caregiver looking after a person with memory loss a break in the home. There is a limit on the number of hours a month. There may be a small hourly charge.

Adult Day Program

There are programs that offer social, recreational and educational support. Some of these are:

- Victorian Order of Nurses Adult Day Program
- Seniors Activation Maintenance Program
- Macassa Lodge Outreach
- St. Joseph's Villa Geriatric Day Program

Day centres and programs offer transportation, activities, therapy and hot meals. There may be a fee based on the ability to pay.

If you are interested in any Adult Day Programs, ask to see a Social Worker.

There are other resources you may be able to use. This depends on where you live. If you want to talk to a Social Worker when you are in the hospital, tell your nurse or call the Social Worker Department yourself at 905-522-1155 ext. 33101.

Learn to Relax

Here is a relaxation program you can practice before surgery and continue to do it after surgery.

- This program takes about 20 to 30 minutes to do. Practice relaxing 2 times a day. Some people follow this program when they wake up and then around 4:00 pm in the afternoon.
 - After a few weeks, you will be able to relax each set of muscles without tensing them first.
1. Take the telephone off the hook and ask your family to leave you alone while you relax.
 2. Begin by focusing on your breathing. This helps your whole body relax.
 3. Lie on a bed or couch.
 4. Breathe in slowly through your nose.
 - Let this breath out slowly through your mouth.
 - Do this 2 to 3 times.
 - As you breathe, say to yourself, "Peaceful, calm, relaxed".
 5. Think about your toes.
 - Curl your toes.
 - Hold.
 - Let your toes relax.
 - Feel your toes become heavy, warm and relaxed.
 6. Pull your toes towards your head.
 - Stretch the back of your leg.
 - Hold.
 - Let go.
 - Let your legs sink into the bed.
 - Feel your legs become heavy, warm and relaxed.

7. Press your legs into the bed.
 - Hold.
 - Let go.
 - Let your legs sink into the bed.
 - Feel your legs become heavy, warm and relaxed.

8. Press your lower back and stomach into the bed.
 - Hold.
 - Let go.
 - Feel your muscles get warm and relaxed.
 - Say to yourself, “Peaceful, calm, relaxed”.

9. Keep on doing this with each set of muscles:
 - Shoulders
 - Neck
 - Hands
 - Arms
 - Chin
 - Mouth
 - Face
 - Eyes, eyelids, muscles around your eyes
 - Forehead
 - Whole body

10. Breathe in slowly through your nose.
 - Let this breath out slowly through your mouth.
 - Do this 2 to 3 times.
 - Say to yourself, “Peaceful, calm, relaxed”.

When you get good at relaxing, you can use it throughout the day or anytime you feel you need it.