Your guide to a safe, comfortable surgery
Welcome

Thanks for choosing us

We’re pleased you chose Northern Dutchess Hospital for your surgical procedure. While you’re with us, we understand that you’ll probably have questions. That’s why we put together this guide for you – we believe it will help you feel more comfortable about what’s ahead. Of course, if you have any additional questions, please don’t hesitate to ask your physician.
Preparing for surgery

Step 1: Make an appointment for medical clearance

Depending on your medical history or type of surgical procedure, you may need to have a medical clearance from your primary care physician and/or a specialist prior to your surgery.

Please be sure to schedule these appointments at least two weeks before your surgery. This way, we can gather all your healthcare information in plenty of time for our anesthesia care providers to review your chart.

Make an appointment to see your primary care physician for clearance if requested by your surgeon OR if any of the following apply to you:

- Oxygen use at home
- Chronic breathing problems
- Diabetes with insulin dependence
- Overweight/obesity
- Kidney disease

You’ll also need to get medical clearance from your primary care physician if you’re having one of the following procedures:

- Total joint replacement
- Spine surgery
- Bariatric surgery
- Prostate surgery

Make an appointment to see a cardiologist for clearance if requested by your surgeon OR if any of the following apply to you:

- Atrial fibrillation
- A pacemaker
- Stent placement and/or previous angiogram
- History of any cardiac surgery
- Congestive heart failure
- History of any cardiac event requiring hospitalization

If you’re being treated for any form of cancer or blood disorder, be sure to see your oncologist and/or hematologist.
Preparing for surgery (continued)

Step 2: Arrange for transportation after surgery
After you’ve received anesthesia, it’s not safe for you to drive. We can’t allow you to get behind the wheel, so please make arrangements for a friend or loved one to drive you home after your procedure. We also don’t let patients go home on public transportation, but we do allow Medicaid taxi transport.

Step 3: Make a list of medications
Put together a list of all of your medications, including prescriptions, over-the-counter vitamins, supplements, herbal remedies and pain relievers—and have it on hand.

Step 4: Complete a pre-surgical interview
The Pre-Surgical Testing Department will contact you. An appointment will be set up for a phone interview with a registered nurse who’ll gather information about your health history.

The nurse will need to know your:
• Complete medication list (see step 3)
• Medical history
• History of allergies to medications or latex products
• Preferred pharmacy
• History of surgical procedures
• Medical clearance appointments status (see step 1)
• History of sleep apnea

Step 5: Arrange for childcare, if needed
Have young children? Be sure to make arrangements for them to be cared for during your stay with us. We strive to make our patient care areas a peaceful place where patients can relax as they prepare for and recover from surgery. It’s not the appropriate place for young children.

Step 6: Do’s and don’ts the week before surgery
• Avoid drinking any alcohol at least five days before your surgery.
• If you smoke, cut down the number of cigarettes you smoke by one every day. On the day before and the morning of your surgery, please abstain from smoking at all. This will help reduce any complications with your lungs after your surgery. If you’re being admitted to the hospital after your procedure, your surgeon may be able to prescribe a nicotine patch.
• Confirm that you’ll have a friend/loved one drive you home from the hospital after you’re discharged.
• Review any special orders requested by your surgeon in preparation for surgery. If there are any questions regarding these instructions, call your surgeon’s office for clarification.
• If you develop a fever, head or chest cold before surgery, contact your surgeon to let him/her know you’re sick. Also contact your surgeon if you develop a skin rash or infection near the operative site. Your surgeon may have additional instructions about these issues.
• Don’t shave the hair on or near your surgical site. The admitting nurses will use a clipper, if necessary, on the morning of your surgery. If you’re having surgery on any area of your legs, please don’t shave the hair on your legs at least 48 hours prior to surgery.
Universal decolonization instructions for surgical patients with hardware

Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) is bacteria sometimes found in the nose and skin and can be resistant to many antibiotics. Methicillin-susceptible Staphylococcus aureus (MSSA) is bacteria is bacteria commonly found on the skin. The removal of these bacteria before surgery is called decolonization, and it aids in the prevention of post-operative surgical site infections.

Treatment is simple and consists of two steps.

Step 1: Chlorhexidine wipes
- Shower the day before surgery. Use wipes as instructed in the morning and evening. Do not shower the day of surgery.
- Do not allow this product to come in contact with your eyes, ears or mouth.
- Do not use any powders, creams or lotions after you use the chlorhexidine.
- Do not shave your body within 48 hours before surgery.
- It is normal for the skin to have a temporary, tacky feel for several minutes after the solution is applied.

Step 2: Nasal ointment procedure
- Your surgeon’s office will call in a prescription to your pharmacy.
- You will use the prescribed nasal ointment twice a day for five days prior to your scheduled surgery.
- Wash your hands before and after application.
- Use a Q-tip to apply the ointment.
- Apply a pea-sized amount of the ointment to the inside of each nostril. Press your nostrils together and massage for about one minute.

The morning of surgery

- Don’t take anything by mouth — including gum, mints, hard candy, cough drops or water. You may only take the medicines that Pre-Surgical testing has instructed you to take with a very small sip of water. This is very important for your safety, and failure to follow these directions could result in the rescheduling of your procedure.
- Take a shower with an antibacterial soap such as Dial. If you’re having total joint replacement, use the chlorhexidine wipes given to you at the Total Joint Replacement Class, and follow the instructions given to you for their use. Don’t apply any lotions, creams, makeup or perfumes after you bathe. Underarm deodorant may be used if approved by the Pre-Surgical Testing nurse.
- If you’re a sleep apnea patient who will be admitted to stay overnight, please bring your CPAP/BIPAP machine with you.
- Wear your eyeglasses and hearing aids, and bring the cases you use for them with you. Don’t wear contact lenses to your surgical procedure. Dentures may be worn to the hospital but may need to be removed for the procedure. We’ll provide a denture cup for storage.
- For your comfort and ease of dressing, wear loose and comfortable clothing. If you’re having eye or shoulder surgery, we recommend that you don’t wear a shirt that goes over your head. This makes it easier for you to get dressed while wearing an eye patch or arm sling.
- Wear low-heeled and formfitting shoes to prevent slips and falls.
- Leave valuables and jewelry at home. If you have body piercings, remove them before you come in for your surgery. Don’t bring a cell phone unless you’re accompanied by someone who will care for it while you’re in surgery.
- You may wish to take advantage of our complimentary valet parking service the morning of your surgery. Simply pull up to the main lobby awning entrance and our staff will park your car for you.
- Once inside the main lobby, check in at the Registration Department. A volunteer will escort you and your family to the Surgical Services Department. From there, the preoperative nurses will admit you and begin preparing you for your surgery. They’ll establish an IV site for the anesthesiologist to give you medicine during your procedure. You’ll have an opportunity to speak with your surgeon, anesthesiologist and operating room nurse prior to your surgical procedure.
Questions? We’ve got answers

How do I find out what time I need to be at the hospital for my surgery?
You must be available to receive a call from the hospital between 2 and 4 pm the day before your scheduled surgery to find out your time of arrival for your procedure. If surgery is on a Monday, you will be called on the Friday before.

What medications can I take on the day of my surgery?
Please refer to the directions given to you by the nurse you spoke with during your phone interview.

What am I allowed to eat and drink on the morning of my procedure?
If you’re receiving anesthesia during your procedure, DO NOT take anything by mouth from midnight the night before until after the surgery is complete—with the exception of medications ordered by the Pre-Surgical Testing (PST) nurse with a very small sip of water. Eating and drinking before surgery may result in having to reschedule your procedure, as it can cause you to aspirate your stomach contents while under anesthesia.

I’m diabetic, and I use insulin to manage my blood sugar. How will this affect my care?
Refer to the medication instructions that the PST nurse gave you during your phone interview. We try our best to schedule diabetic patients earlier in the day so that we can check your blood sugar on arrival and give you medication if needed. If your surgery is scheduled later in the day but you begin to feel faint or dizzy, call the Ambulatory Surgery Unit Department at (845) 871-3375.

Which over-the-counter pain medications can I take the week before my surgery?
Tylenol can be taken. We ask that our patients avoid any nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDS)/over-the-counter pain relievers five days before surgery. This family of medicines includes Motrin, Advil, ibuprofen, Aleve, naproxen and aspirin. These medications have a tendency to thin the blood. You must stop all over-the-counter vitamins and supplements five days prior to your surgery.

We hope this packet helps ensure a smooth and safe experience for your upcoming surgical procedure. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to care for you at Northern Dutchess Hospital.

TTY/Accessibility: (800) 421-1220
Northern Dutchess Hospital
6511 Springbrook Avenue
Rhinebeck, NY 12572

Call the Pre-Surgical Testing (PST) department
at (845) 871-3379

Fax the PST department
at (845) 871-3389

Call the NDH Registration Department at (845) 871-3225

TTY/Accessibility:
(800) 412-1220

Language interpretation service available

nuvancehealth.org