It will be our pleasure to care for you during your upcoming surgical procedure.

As a surgical patient, you are likely to have many questions. We hope this guide helps you feel more comfortable about the steps you will take to prepare for surgery. If you have remaining questions, contact your physician before your procedure or call us at 845.871.3379.
**Preparation 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 will assist us in gathering all of 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 if you:
- Use oxygen at home
- Have chronic breathing problems
- Have diabetes with insulin dependence
- Are overweight or obese
- Have kidney disease

Obtain medical clearance from your primary care physician if you will be 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 you have any of the following:
- 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 are being treated for any form of cancer or blood disorder, please see your oncologist and/or hematologist.

**Step 2:** Arrange for post-surgery transportation.

We cannot allow you to drive after you have received anesthesia. Make arrangements for a friend or loved one to drive you home after your procedure. We do not allow our patients to go home via public transportation, but we do allow Medicaid taxi transport.
Preparation for Surgery

**Step 3:** Make a list of medications.

Make a complete list of your medications, including prescriptions and over-the-counter vitamins, supplements, herbal remedies and pain relievers.

**Step 4:** Complete a pre-surgery interview.

You will be contacted by either your surgeon or the Pre-Surgical Testing Department. When you are contacted, an appointment will be set up for a phone interview with a registered nurse who will gather information about your health history.

Some information that the nurse will need to know about you during the interview:
- 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 (see step 1)
- History of sleep apnea

**Step 5:** Arrange for child care if needed.

If you are the parent of young children, please make arrangements for them to be cared for as you are having your procedure done. We strive to make our patient care areas a peaceful place where patients can relax as they prepare for and recover from surgery, and this setting is not appropriate for young children.

**Step 6:** Take these special actions the week before your surgery.

- Avoid using any alcohol at least five days before your surgery.
- If you are a smoker, 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 are being admitted to the hospital after your procedure, your surgeon may be able to prescribe a nicotine patch.
- Confirm that you will have a friend/loved one drive you home from the hospital after you are 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 or head/chest cold before your surgery, please contact your surgeon to let him/her know that you are sick. In addition, if you develop a skin rash or infection near the operative site, please contact your surgeon and inform him/her. Your surgeon may have additional instructions regarding these issues.

• Please do not 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 are having surgery on any area of your legs, please do not shave the hair on your legs at least 48 hours prior to surgery.

Universal Decolonization Instructions for Surgical Patients With Hardware

MRSA (methicillin resistant staph aureus) is bacteria sometimes found in the nose and can be resistant to many antibiotics. MSSA (methicillin sensitive staph aureus) is bacteria commonly found on the skin. The removal of these bacteria before surgery is called decolonization and aids in the prevention of post-operative surgical site infections. Treatment is simple and consists of two steps.

Step 1 – Chlorhexidine shower
• Take daily showers for at least three days prior to your scheduled surgery using the chlorhexidine soap you received from the Pre-Surgical Testing nurse or office.
• Take the last shower the morning 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
• 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.
• Do not take anything by mouth — this includes gum, mints, hard candy, cough drops or water. You may only take the medicines that the Pre-Surgical Testing nurse 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 are a total joint replacement patient, please use the chlorhexidine wash given to you at the total joint class.) Do not 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 are a sleep apnea patient who will be admitted to stay overnight, please bring your C-PAP/Bi-PAP machine with you.

• Wear your eyeglasses and hearing aids, and bring the cases you use for them with you. Do not wear contact lenses to your surgical procedure. Dentures may be worn to the hospital but may need to be removed for the procedure. We will provide a denture cup for storage.

• Wear loose and comfortable clothing. If you are having eye or shoulder surgery, we recommend that you do not wear a shirt that will go over your head. This will make it easier for you to get dressed while wearing an eye patch or arm sling.

• Wear low-heeled and form-fitting shoes to prevent slips and falls.

• Leave valuables and jewelry at home. If you have body piercings, please remove all of them before you come in for your surgery. Please do not bring a cell phone unless you are accompanied by someone who will care for your device while you are in surgery.

• You may wish to take advantage of our free valet parking service the morning of your surgery. Simply pull up to the main lobby awning entrance and let our staff assist by parking 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 pre-operative nurses will admit you and begin preparing you for your surgery. They will establish an IV site for the anesthesiologist to give you medicines during your procedure. You will have an opportunity to speak with your surgeon, anesthesiologist and operating room nurse prior to your surgical procedure.
Frequently Asked Questions

How do I find out what time I need to be at the hospital for my surgery?
On the weekday before your surgery, call 845.871.3225 between 3pm and 5pm to find out what time you should report to the Northern Dutchess Hospital Registration Department. (For example, if your surgery is on a Monday, call on the preceding Friday.)

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 are receiving anesthesia during your procedure, you are NOT allowed to take anything by mouth from midnight the night before until after the surgery is completed, with the exception of the medications instructed by the Pre-Surgical Testing nurse with a very small sip of water. Eating and drinking before your surgery could result in having to reschedule your procedure. This policy helps prevent you from inhaling stomach contents while under anesthesia.

I am diabetic, and I use insulin to manage my blood sugar. How will this affect my care?
Refer to the medication instructions that the Pre-Surgical Testing 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?
Typically we ask that our patients avoid any nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs)/over-the-counter pain relievers five days before surgery. This family of medicine includes Motrin, Advil, ibuprofen, Aleve, naproxen and aspirin. These medications have a tendency to thin the blood.

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.

The Surgical Services Department
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Pre-Surgical Testing Fax: 845.871.3389
NDH Registration Department: 845.871.3225

TTY/Accessibility: 800.421.1220
Language interpretation service available

healthquest.org/NDH