Your surgeon has scheduled you for surgery at Huntsman Cancer Hospital. This factsheet will help you prepare for your surgery. Our world-class staff will do all we can to make you comfortable before, during, and after your stay.

Pre-Operative Interview
Part of your preparation for surgery may be an interview with a health care provider in the Short Stay Unit. The doctor or nurse will take your health history and help you prepare for surgery. If your surgeon does not schedule an interview, a nurse from the Short Stay Unit will call you.

Questions Before Your Surgery?
If you have questions about preparing for your surgery, please call the Presurgery Unit nurse at 801-587-4380.

Why do I need this appointment?
This interview will help you know what to expect the day of your surgery. It is important that you participate in your care plans before and after your surgery. This visit will provide information to make your hospital stay as safe and pleasant as possible.

During your visit, we will draw your blood for lab tests. You may also have X-rays and tests for your breathing and heart (such as an EKG).

What should I bring to the interview?
- A list of all the medications you take. We will need to know their dosages and how often you take them. The list should also include any vitamins or herbal supplements you take and their dosages. If you don’t know this information, bring all your medicine bottles and the nurse will help you. This helps us avoid drug interaction problems.
- Results from lab tests done at another facility within 30 days of your surgery date.

What about my regular medications?
If you take medications regularly, the nurse will tell you which of them to take on the day of surgery. We will give you these instructions in writing.

If you have diabetes, we will give you special dosing instructions for your insulin or oral medications.

On Surgery Day – Before Your Operation
When you arrive at the Surgery/Endoscopy admissions desk on the third floor of Huntsman Cancer Hospital, we will take you to a room where you will prepare for your surgery. We will take your temperature, pulse, and blood pressure and weigh you. We use your weight to know how much anesthesia and other medications to give you.

A nurse will confirm your surgery time and the procedure you will have. The nurse will also let you know of any delays, and make sure all your tests are done. Before you go into surgery, we will put an intravenous (IV) line in your arm. Please let the nurse know if you have any nausea, fever, or pain.

It is normal to feel some anxiety before your surgery. The anesthesia team will meet with you to review your health history and discuss the type of anesthetic to give you. A member of the team may give you medication through your IV line to help you relax before you go for your surgery.

You will meet another nurse who will be with you during your surgery. Your nurse will also confirm the phone number of a family member, so we can call with updates on your progress during surgery.

Your scheduled surgery time is only an estimate. Usually procedures start as scheduled, but sometimes surgery takes longer than planned.

For more patient education information, call 1-888-424-2100 toll free or go to www.huntsmancancer.org
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In the Operating Room (OR)

In the OR, you will see a lot of activity and people wearing surgical gowns. There will be bright lights, strange equipment, and sterile instruments.

Do your best to stay calm and relaxed. Your anesthesia team and the nurse will have all their attention focused on you and your safety. In fact, if your anesthesiologist gave you medication to help you relax before surgery, you may not remember the OR at all.

You will receive help in moving from the stretcher to the operating table. The anesthesiology team may repeat some of the questions about allergies you may have.

Your anesthesiologist will be near your head. He or she will attach to you a blood pressure cuff, heart monitors, and a tool to measure the oxygen in your blood. These will monitor your vital signs during your surgery. The anesthesiologist will give you medications through your IV to make you comfortable and relaxed throughout the surgery.

The surgeon and his or her team will perform the procedure, with help from a nurse or technician. The nurse oversees all that happens in the operating room to assure your safety and that of others in the room. The nurse will also give your family updates on the progress of your surgery.

In the Postanesthesia Care Unit (PACU)

After your surgery is finished, the anesthesiologist will wake you up. We will take you to a recovery room called the PACU.

We will check your vital signs at least every 10 minutes. At first you will wear an oxygen mask, but once your breathing rate and blood oxygen levels allow, we will replace it with a tube that rests just inside your nose. The nurses caring for you will have you breathe deeply and cough. The nurse will check your pain levels often and give you medications as you need them.

The anesthesia can raise your risk of choking, so the nurse will not give you ice chips or water until you can swallow safely. The surgeon may order that you have no liquids at all for a certain time. If your mouth is dry, the nurse can swab your mouth.

As a rule, family members are not allowed to visit patients in the PACU. If there is a long wait, we will move you to a PACU area where we can monitor you, and one family member may stay. This family member will need to leave if you or another patient has a medical problem.

The types of surgery and anesthesia determine how long you will stay in the PACU. Most patients stay in the PACU for about one hour. When your pain and nausea are under control and your vital signs are stable, we will move you to a hospital room. If you are going home the day of your surgery, we will move you to the Short Stay Unit.

Managing Pain After Surgery

You will likely have some pain after your surgery. We will give you pain medications and therapies to make you as comfortable as we can.

The nurse will discuss the rating scale used to assess your pain and ways to ease your pain after surgery. We will give you a brochure called “Working Together to Achieve Effective Pain Relief” that has more information about ways you can help cope with and control pain.

Before your surgery, your health care team collected a list of your pain medications and pain assessment information. This information helps treat your pain after surgery.

While you are in the PACU, the nurse will ask you to rate your pain on a scale of 1 to 10 with 10 being the worst pain you can imagine. Your nurse will ask you what level of pain you can tolerate and at what level of pain you will need medication. Being as accurate as possible will help the nurse know when to give you medicine.

Each person feels pain differently—what is a “5” for you may be a “10” for someone else. The nurse will listen to you, acknowledge your pain, and give you medications safely. Because we monitor your vital

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signs while you are in the PACU, the nurse can give you pain medication more often than when you are in a hospital room or taking medications at home.

Inpatient Admission

After the hospital staff settles you into your room, your family can join you. The staff will teach you how to call the nurses and use the bed controls and television. The nurse will discuss the diet and activity levels your surgeon allows. The nurse will also find out your comfort level and give you medications. You are the most important member of your care team. You can speed up your recovery by asking questions when you have them and telling your health care team how you are feeling.

Short Stay Unit

If you are scheduled to go home the same day as your surgery, you will go from the PACU to the Short Stay Unit. We will take you to the unit on a stretcher and will help you move from the stretcher to the recliner. We will attach machines to check your vital signs. If your oxygen level is less than 90 percent, we will give you oxygen until you can keep a level of 90 percent or higher.

The nurse will give you medicine for pain and nausea to make sure you are comfortable. The nurse will have you to take small sips of water or other clear liquid and eat some crackers before giving you oral medications.

As soon as you are settled in, your family can visit you in your room and stay until you go home. Depending on what type of surgery you had, you will probably be ready to go home within one or two hours. You may still be having some pain, but the nurse will make every effort to reduce it. We admit some patients to the hospital if there are still pain or nausea problems. You will not go home until it is safe to do so.

Postdischarge Phone Call

Within 24 to 48 hours after you go home, a nurse will call to see how you are doing. The nurse will ask about pain and nausea and if you are able to tolerate fluids and activity.

You will also be asked questions that evaluate the care you received. Your responses help us recognize and reward staff members who have given exceptional care. Also, if any of the care you received was not satisfactory, please let us know. Your responses help us improve patient care.

How We Keep You Safe Before and After Your Surgery

- We use at least two methods to make sure we have the correct patient for the correct procedure.
- Your surgeon will mark your skin to make sure they operate on the correct site on your body.
- We give you antibiotics before your surgery to prevent infection.
- We wash our hands before and after meeting with each patient.
- As part of our “SPEAK UP” program, we ask that you let us know about anything that concerns you or seems unsafe.
- We ask that you call for assistance each time you want to get up while in the hospital. We want to help, we have time, and it is our privilege to assist you.

If you have problems after your surgery, call your surgeon’s office.

If you have a serious problem and cannot contact your surgeon, call the University Hospital operator at 801-581-2121, give your surgeon’s name, and request to speak with the resident who is on call for your surgeon.

For life-threatening emergencies, call 911 and go to the nearest emergency room.

HCI’s world-class staff will do all they can to make you comfortable before, during, and after your surgery.