



4 questions to ask before having surgery

Millions of people have surgery every year. No matter what your reason is for having surgery, be sure you ask your surgeon these questions in advance:

1. Do I have other options?

Surgery is safer today than ever before. But, there are still risks to having any surgery. Find out if other treatments, such as medicine or therapy, may be tried first. This will depend on how serious your health condition is. With any treatment, you and your doctor should discuss any possible risks and benefits.

2. What will happen during the procedure?

Ask your doctor to explain how and why the surgery will be performed. Where will your incisions be made? What kind of anesthesia is used? How will you be monitored during surgery?

3. What should I do before surgery?

Tell your doctor about all supplements, vitamins and medicines you take. You may need to stop taking some or all of these things a few days or weeks before surgery. Plus, you may need to follow a special diet and/or stop using tobacco for a period of time.

4. What is the recovery like?

Many of today's minimally invasive procedures mean that you can go home the same day. Major surgeries may require you stay more days in the hospital. Ask your doctor about which activities you should avoid and when you can get back to things like work, driving, exercise, and a regular diet.

Sometimes, surgery must be performed in emergency situations. In these cases, you may not be able to talk with your doctor beforehand. But, be sure to talk afterward about what you can expect from your recovery and how to take care of yourself in the days and weeks ahead.