

# Preparing for your Surgery at Norwalk Hospital



Norwalk  
Hospital

The right care  
is right here.

# Thank you for choosing Norwalk Hospital for your surgery.

To help you get ready, this booklet contains important information about your surgical experience. Please take a few minutes to read it carefully.

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# Before Surgery

The Patient Admissions and Testing Nurse (PAT) will call you between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. two days before your surgery. If your surgery is scheduled on a Monday, the nurse will call you the Thursday before. If you have not received a call, please call (203) 852-2758 Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

## Pre-Registration Instructions:

It is your responsibility to pre-register before your surgery by calling (203) 852-2077 Monday through Friday between the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. You will need to have the following information available when you call: The date that you are scheduled for surgery; Health Insurance Information (Please check with your healthcare insurance provider to see whether or not you are required to obtain pre-certification for the surgical procedure that you need to have performed.

Also please let us know if you have any special needs and/or require assistance with the call; please call us at (203) 852-2758 between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday to schedule a specific time for the interview with a family member or friend available to assist you.

## Pre-Operative Testing:

Your physician may request that you have pre-operative tests. There are two options:

The first option is the One Stop Testing area at Norwalk Hospital which is located on the first floor. Directions to One Stop from the first floor main lobby are: Enter the main lobby and turn to the right at the main hallway; then make a left and proceed to the registration area for One Stop. Directions from the third floor Emergency Ambulatory Entrance: Enter onto the third floor and proceed to the clinic elevators which are immediately in front of you. Take these elevators down to the first floor and exit off the elevator to the right and follow the hallway to the end making a right turn and proceed to the One Stop registration area.

## Before Surgery (continued)

If you opt to use your physician offices or other lab facilities, please be sure that lab results from outside sources are sent to your surgeon's office and also to the Ambulatory Surgery Department at Norwalk Hospital. These results can be faxed to Ambulatory Surgery at:  
**Fax # (203) 855-3981 or (203) 855-3938.**

We recommend that tests be done three to seven days in advance in order for the results to be received by the hospital before the date of your surgery.



## Before Surgery (continued)

Please follow these instructions:

- If you smoke or chew tobacco, discontinue its use 24 hours prior to surgery.
- The evening before surgery, you may eat a regular supper unless otherwise instructed by your physician. For the remainder of the evening, you may eat lightly. Avoid fatty or greasy foods.
- Do not drink any alcohol after 6:00 pm the night before surgery.
- Healthy\* adult and pediatric patients scheduled for elective surgery/procedure under any form of anesthesia may have up to eight ounces of clear liquids (water, fruit juices without pulp, Jell-O, carbonated beverages, clear tea, and black coffee) up to two hours prior to coming to the hospital.
- All cardiac, hypertension (high blood pressure) medication, asthma medication, systemic antacids, seizure and Parkinson's medication should be taken with a sip of water in the morning of surgery. Other medication including oral diabetic medications or insulin should only be taken on the orders of the surgeon, medical consultant or anesthesiologist.
- Get a good night's rest the night before surgery.
- You may brush your teeth the morning of surgery, but do not swallow any water or toothpaste.
- Bathe and shampoo preferably with an antiseptic/antibacterial soap but do not shave near the surgical area before coming to the hospital; this helps prevent infection. Make sure your hair is dry prior to arriving at the hospital.
- Wear loose-fitting clothing to the hospital that is easy to get off and on and will fit over a dressing.
- Do not wear any makeup, jewelry (including body piercing), hair pins or nail polish to the hospital.

\*Healthy patient is one with no evidence or history of Gastric Esophageal Reflux Disease (Stomach Reflux), difficulty swallowing, or other gastrointestinal motility disorders, and also metabolic disorders such as diabetes mellitus which may increase the risk of regurgitation and pulmonary aspiration.

## What to Bring to the Hospital

- A list of your current medications, including dosages and how often you take them, but do not bring any medications with you.
- Cases for your eyeglasses, contact lenses or hearing aids. If you wear dentures or prosthetics, they will be removed prior to surgery and returned to you after the operation. If you prefer, they can be left at home.
- A small bag with personal items only (toothbrush, toothpaste, comb, shaving kit, toiletries, etc.) if you are staying overnight in the hospital.
- A favorite small toy or clean blanket if your child is having surgery.
- A photo ID, insurance cards, Medicare and/or Medicaid cards, Living Will or Advance Directive (if you have these).
- Any appropriate medical records, including blood tests, EKGs, history/physical or pacemaker/defibrillator (AICD) cards.
- Oxygen or a breathing machine (CPAP/BiPAP) if you use them.
- Any postoperative brace or support that you might need, such as crutches or a walker.

All personal belongings will be placed in an unlocked locker while you are in surgery. **Do not bring any valuables.**

## Who to Bring to the Hospital

One or two family members or friends are welcome to join you, but no children. A parent or guardian of a patient under the age of 18 should stay in the facility until the patient is discharged from ambulatory surgery.

Once you are admitted, your family will not see you until your operation is over. They are welcome to wait in the designated surgical waiting area where complimentary coffee, tea and hot chocolate are available. Also internet access for your family's use is available.

Your family should notify the receptionist if they wish to speak with your physician. The physician will look for your family in the Surgical Waiting Lounge after surgery or call them if those arrangements are made.

## When you Arrive at the Hospital

The hospital offers free valet parking on Maple Street for those who are undergoing surgery. Follow signs for Emergency/Ambulatory Care Center. Come into Ambulatory Care Door, proceed to elevator straight ahead (Restricted for patient transportation) and take to the 5th floor. Please check in with a volunteer in the Surgical Family Waiting Room on arrival.

If family members wish to leave and return at the time of your discharge, they may call 203-852-2150 to receive information about your condition and discharge time, as long as you have given Norwalk Hospital permission to release this information. You must make arrangements for a family member or friend to drive you home. You cannot drive yourself home and no taxis are allowed. If you do not have a responsible adult to drive you home, your surgery may be cancelled.

## Getting Ready for Surgery

Once you are checked in, you will be met by a registered nurse who will review your health assessment. You will be asked if you have any allergies, as well as when you ate or drank last. You will also be asked about the planned surgical site and procedure. If you have not yet signed a surgical and anesthesia consent form, you will be asked to do so.

The anesthesiologist or nurse will start an intravenous line and take your blood pressure, pulse and temperature. If any additional lab work is required, it will be done at this time. Your surgeon will be in to speak with you prior to your procedure. Any questions that you have should be asked at this time. Your surgical site will be marked (if applicable) by your surgeon and the surgical consent signed by you.

# Anesthesia

You will have an opportunity to speak with the anesthesiologist before your surgery. The anesthesiologist may recommend a specific type of anesthesia. However, this decision will be made jointly by you, the surgeon and the anesthesiologist. They will explain the risks and benefits associated with each option. Please do not hesitate to ask questions if something is not clear to you.

Four basic types of anesthesia are available:

- **General anesthesia** – administered using either a mask or medications injected through an intravenous catheter to make you unconscious. Your anesthesiologist carefully monitors all your vital signs, bodily functions and level of awareness.
- **Monitored anesthesia (MAC)** - sedation medications are administered through an intravenous catheter. This can be a light sedation, in which you **are** awake and aware of your surroundings, or it can be heavier and you will be asleep.
- **Regional anesthesia** – involves an injection near a cluster of nerves to numb a specific area of the body. During surgery, you are usually given a sedative to relax you.
- **Local anesthesia** – an anesthetic drug is injected into a specific part of your body, numbing only that location. You will not be sedated with this type of anesthesia.

Some anesthetic options extend through the recovery period to provide ongoing pain control. If this is an option for you, your anesthesiologist will discuss this with you the day of surgery if not before.

If you had surgery at Norwalk Hospital previously with a certain anesthesiologist and you would prefer to have him/her again, you can request this by calling the anesthesia secretary at 203-852-2276.



# The Operating Room

Waiting times before your surgery begins will vary depending upon other surgeries and emergencies. We will make every effort to keep you informed if a delay should occur.

When the Operating Room (OR) team is ready, an OR nurse will come to see you. Once again, you will be asked to identify yourself, any allergies you have, the last time you ate or drank, the planned surgical site, etc.

You will be taken to the OR and will be assisted in moving to the operating table. Once in the OR, monitors will be applied. Expect the OR to be cool with bright lights and unfamiliar sounds.

## After Your Surgery

Your recovery begins in the Post Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU) with individual care provided by nurses specially trained in the care of anesthetized patients. You will be closely monitored here on a continuous basis and you may be given oxygen for a short time. You will stay in the PACU from 30 minutes to two hours, depending on the type of anesthesia you had and the procedure performed.

You will repeatedly be asked if you have any discomfort or nausea. It is important to tell us so we can promptly manage it. As your anesthesia wears off, you may feel chills or notice that noises seem louder. This is normal. We will make sure you have warm blankets for comfort.

Family members are not allowed in the PACU. However, for children, one parent is encouraged to join their child once he/she has awoken.

If you are having same day surgery, once the PACU nursing staff has determined that you are ready, you will be transported to a lounge chair in the Ambulatory Unit to finish your recovery. If you are to be admitted to the hospital, you will remain in the PACU until your room is ready.

## If You're Having Same Day Surgery



When you arrive back in the Ambulatory Unit, you will be given something to drink. Your vital signs will continue to be monitored. You may still feel groggy or sleepy at this time. Family member(s) can now join you. You will be observed and made comfortable until an anesthesiologist discharges you home. This could be as brief as 30 minutes or several hours depending on your individual recovery.

Discharge information (verbal and written) will be reviewed with you and your family. Prescriptions that your surgeon has requested will also be reviewed with you. Your prescriptions can be filled for your convenience in the Norwalk Hospital SWC pharmacy to be ready for you upon discharge.

When you are ready to go home, a family member/friend should drive up to the Ambulatory Care/valet entrance on Maple Street. Please advise that individual to call (203) 852-2150 and let the nurse know that he or she is at the third floor valet entrance. The nurse will arrange for you to be transported by wheelchair so that you can meet your driver there.

## When You Get Home

Plan to spend a quiet evening at home. You will be tired and your body will need to rest. You may not feel up to your typical activities for several days, so plan to take it easy until you feel back to normal.

You might experience some minor after-effects from the anesthesia such as drowsiness, nausea, muscle aches, sore throat and occasional dizziness or headache. These effects should disappear in the hours following surgery.

An ambulatory surgery nurse will call you within one or two business days after your surgery to check on your progress and discuss any questions you have. Please call your surgeon if you have questions about the surgical site, what you can and cannot do, or when you can return to work.

You may receive a patient satisfaction survey regarding your surgical experience. Please do not hesitate to offer suggestions, comments or opinions as these will help us improve our service to our patients, we strive for all 5's at Norwalk Hospital.



## If You Stay in the Hospital

If you are admitted to the hospital following surgery, you will be taken to your room once the PACU nursing staff has determined you are ready. Once there, you have three different options for postoperative pain management:

- Injection, as ordered by your surgeon.
- Patient-controlled analgesia (PCA). A pre-set dosage of pain medication is administered through an IV which you control by pressing a button whenever you experience pain. The benefit of PCA is that you do not have to wait for a nurse to give you pain medicine. PCA is safe because the pump is programmed so that you cannot receive an overdose no matter how many times you press the button.
- Continuous epidural infusion. An epidural catheter is inserted in your back. With this option, you are less likely to be groggy than with the traditional injection or PCA.



# Postoperative Exercises

Please practice these exercises before your surgery so that you will be familiar with them once your surgery is over. If you stay in the hospital, you will be asked to repeat these exercises every one or two hours after surgery until you are up and around. Please ask your nurse to assist you if you have difficulty.

## Exercises for Your Lungs

- 1 • Inhale as deeply as you can.
  - Hold for a second or two.
  - Exhale completely.
  - Repeat several times.
- 2 • Inhale Deeply
  - Produce a deep abdominal cough (not shallow throat cough) by short, sharp expiration. If you have an abdominal incision, cover your incision with hands, pillow or a folded blanket. Flexing your knees also helps relieve strain on abdominal muscles.

## Exercises for Your Legs

Perform the following exercises fairly slowly but with strong muscle contraction.

- 1 • Push toes of both feet toward the foot of the bed. Relax both feet. Pull toes toward chin. Relax feet.
- 2 • Circle both ankles, first to the right, then to the left. Repeat three times. Relax.
- 3 • Bend each knee alternately, sliding foot up along the bed. Relax.

To maintain good circulation while in your hospital bed, lie on each side as well as on your back unless you have been told not to.

To turn easily:

- Bend one knee, planting foot firmly on bed.
- Lift arm overhead (in direction of turn.)
- Roll onto side, pushing with bent leg. Use the bed rails to help you turn.

## Billing Information

Norwalk Hospital will send a bill to your primary and secondary insurance companies. The bill includes charges for hospital services and supplies. A statement will be sent to your home about four to six weeks after your surgery.

Your surgeon, anesthesiologist, pathologist or radiologist will each bill you separately for their fees. If you have questions regarding a bill from these providers, please contact their offices directly.

Payment must be collected prior to surgery for all elective surgeries not covered by insurance such as plastic/cosmetic surgery.

Please call our billing department at 203-852-2016, Monday – Thursday, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. and Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. with any questions you might have.

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We hope that you have the most positive surgical experience possible here at Norwalk Hospital. Please let us know how we can help before, during or after your procedure.

Best wishes for a speedy and complete recovery.





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## DIRECTIONS TO NORWALK HOSPITAL

### **1-95 NORTHBOUND** **(FROM NEW YORK):**

Take Exit 14; at end of exit ramp turn left to traffic light on US-1. Turn right onto US-1 and proceed to 3rd traffic light at Maple Street; turn left into Emergency/Ambulatory Surgery Valet Entrance.

### **1-95 SOUTHBOUND** **(FROM NEW HAVEN):**

Take Exit 15 and take the right fork on the ramp to the traffic light. Turn right onto West Avenue; proceed to 3rd traffic light. Turn left onto Maple Street; turn left into Emergency/Ambulatory Surgery Valet Entrance.

### **MERRITT PARKWAY NORTHBOUND** **(FROM NEW YORK):**

Take Exit 39 directly onto the Route 7 Connector (follow signs to I-95). Take Exit 1 and turn left onto Van Buren Avenue (US-1). Turn right at the 2nd traffic light onto Maple Street; turn left into Emergency/Ambulatory Surgery Valet Entrance.

### **MERRITT PARKWAY SOUTHBOUND** **(FROM NEW HAVEN):**

Take Exit 38 and turn right onto Route 123 southbound. At the 4th traffic light, Route 123 turns left, but DO NOT turn; continue straight for three more traffic lights. Turn right onto Maple Street; turn left into Emergency/Ambulatory Surgery Valet Entrance.

### **ROUTE 7 SOUTHBOUND** **(FROM DANBURY):**

Just over the Norwalk city line (directly opposite the Department of Motor Vehicles) turn right to the Route 7 Connector (follow signs to I-95). Take Exit 1 and turn left onto Van Buren Avenue (US-1). Turn right at the 2nd traffic light onto Maple Street; turn left into Emergency/Ambulatory Surgery Valet Entrance.

(203) 852-2758 • [www.norwalkhospital.org](http://www.norwalkhospital.org)

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