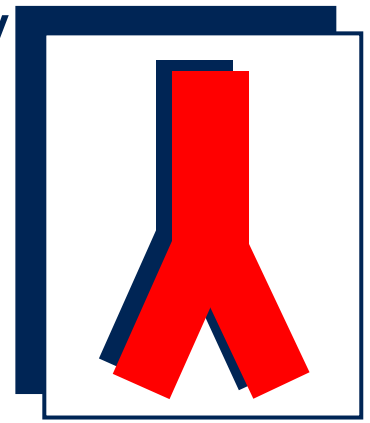


Will Butcher – Vascular Surgery

Patient information

Preparing for Surgery



Having an operation no matter how trivial it may seem is a significant event. Like flying, it doesn't matter how many times you do it, it's still worth going through some of the basics before you go ahead.

Do I need this surgery?

Your doctor will be the best person to talk to about this. Very occasionally the wrong patient may be scheduled for surgery although this almost never happens, if you feel you have been incorrectly identified as needing surgery you should speak up sooner rather than later. What is much more common is that a patient may feel they have been rushed into a decision or don't understand why the surgery is necessary. The only real way to get closure on this issue is to talk to your surgeon again. Rest assured no surgeons are in the business of operating on people who don't want or don't need surgery.

Once a decision has been made and you are comfortable with that, you will be asked to sign a consent form. This is not binding in any way but it does provide some evidence that you and the doctor have discussed the operation and is necessary for that reason. At any time you can withdraw your consent.

In the days before your surgery

Leading up to your surgery there are a few things you can do to prepare yourself for your operation.

- Eat sensibly and well
- Get plenty of rest
- Take some exercise every day (about 30 minutes of gentle exercise is fine)
- Reduce your alcohol consumption
- If you can, give up smoking starting from a week before the surgery.

If you have longer to prepare, getting fit and losing weight will also help

Practical things you can do:

- Ensure you have some simple pain medications in the house like paracetamol or Ibuprofen.
- Consider whether some dressing materials may be needed.
- Ensure your family knows you are having surgery and enlist their help
- Plan how you will get to hospital and who will pick you up.
- Prepare a few meals ahead of time.
- Make sure there are people you can call on for help if your struggling.
- Find out if your surgery will involve general or local anaesthetic
- Check through your information you have been given so you have an idea what will happen
- Make sure you have all your medications available.

Medications

Most medications are safe to take up to and including the day of surgery, some however need to be taken with caution.

- Diabetic medication is often with held prior to surgery, you should check with you surgeon or anaesthetist.
- Blood thinning or anticoagulant medication may need to be stopped sometimes several days before an operation.

Fasting

Any operation which involves a general anaesthetic or any sedation requires that you fast for 6 hours prior to the operation. In some cases small amount of water may be taken up to 2 hours before the surgery but ideally nothing should be eaten or drunk for 6 hours prior to you surgery. In practical terms this means, if your surgery is in the morning you should not eat or drink after midnight and if your surgery is in the afternoon, you can have a breakfast before 6am..

On the day before surgery

- Try and make sure you get a good night sleep the night before.
- Make sure you know what time you have to be at the hospital so you can plan lifts and make sure you wake in plenty of time.
- It is a good idea to pack a few things that you will take with you.

What to take with you:

In general it is good advice not to bring anything too valuable or precious with you to hospital as things can go missing in hospital. Jewellery should be removed if possible and left at home.

For day only surgery bring a small bag with something to do while you are waiting for you surgery, a book or tablet is appropriate.

You should bring walking aids you use as well as glasses for reading.

Xrays and letters pertinent to the admission should be brought. If you have the consent form bring this too. Bring your Medicare card and a method for settling your account as well.

If you are staying overnight you should also bring comfortable sleepwear and slippers. Personal toiletries and all usual medication should be with you as well as sensible underwear.

It is sensible to have a complete list of your regular medications including the doses.

Bring a small amount of cash for minor expenses while in hospital.

On the day of surgery:

Wake in plenty of time, you should have a shower before coming to hospital. Please do not apply any creams or lotions afterward. Also no powders or deodorant should be applied. Dress comfortably with loose fitting clothing that is easy to get on and off. Modest underwear should be chosen.