

Planned surgery

Frequently asked questions



the women's
the royal women's hospital

There's a lot to think about before surgery. This information explains how surgery is booked, what to bring to hospital, what to expect on the day, and what to do if your plans change.

Before surgery – planning ahead

Q. I have a holiday planned. What should I do?

A. Let your nurse know if you won't be available for surgery for any reason. You won't be taken off the waiting list (also called the preparation list), but we need to know so we can record you as "personal Not Ready for Care" during this time.

Q. What does personal Not Ready for Care mean?

A. Life happens - like holidays, work or study. If you can't have your surgery right now, you can ask to delay it. This is called personal Not Ready for Care.

Just let your nurse know. Depending on your surgery, you can delay it for:

- Category 1 – up to 30 days
- Category 2 – up to 90 days
- Category 3 – up to 180 days

During this time, your place on the waiting list is "paused". You can ask for this pause twice, if it fits within the time limits above.

You can find your category information on the letter we sent when you joined the waiting list. If you've lost your letter, please call (03) 8345 3335, Monday to Friday, 8.00am to 4.30pm.

Q. I had my surgery at another hospital. What should I do?

A. Tell your nurse. We will ask for the hospital name and the date of the surgery so we can update our records.

Q. I've moved or need to update my details. Who should I tell?

A. Contact our Planned Surgery team if your details change – like your address, phone number, email, or next of kin.

Call (03) 8345 3335 Monday to Friday between 8:00 am and 4:30 pm.

Your surgery booking

Q. When will my surgery be booked?

A. We'll call or text you when a surgery date is available. We will not send a letter.

When your surgery is confirmed, we will send you an email. If you don't have an email address, we will send you a letter.

Q. What is a formal offer of surgery?

A. A formal offer of surgery is when we give you a surgery date with at least 2 weeks' notice. You can receive:

- 2 formal offers, or
- 1 formal offer, if you have already used all of your Not Ready for Care time.

If you're unable to accept this offer for surgery, we'll take you off the waiting list and record that you declined surgery.

Q. What is a short notice offer of surgery?

A. This is when we give you a surgery date with less than 2 weeks' notice. You don't have to agree to a short notice offer. You won't lose your place on the list if you say no to a short notice offer.

Getting to the hospital

Q. Will you arrange transport for me?

A. No, we don't arrange transport.

You'll need to make your own travel plans to and from the hospital. Please ask a family member, friend, guardian, or support worker to help. They don't need to stay at the hospital while you're having your surgery. But if they want to, they can wait in the lounge on Level 1 of The Women's, in the Welcome Centre on the Ground Floor, or in one of the nearby cafes.

You can travel to and from the hospital by public transport, taxi or ride share. But if you have a general anaesthetic, you must have someone go home with you.

You can find more information about transport options on our website: thewomens.org.au/patients-visitors/your-visit/transport-parking

Q. What if I live far away?

A. If you have family or friends in Melbourne, consider staying with them. You can also find local accommodation options on our website:

thewomens.org.au/patients-visitors/your-visit/accommodation-options

Q. Will I be admitted to hospital the night before my surgery?

A. No. This only happens in very rare cases when it's medically needed. Your nurse will arrange this for you if that happens.

Preparing for the day

Q. What time should I come in?

A. We'll send you a text message the weekday before your surgery. It will tell you what time to come in and when to stop eating and drinking.

Q. What should I bring with me?

A. Please bring the following:

- your Medicare card - or call (03) 8345 3012 if you don't have one
- your Health care card, if you have one
- private health insurance card, if you have one
- any medicines you're taking, including herbal medicines or vitamins
- something to read
- your phone and charger
- loose, comfortable clothes
- glasses, if you wear them
- CPAP machine (freshly cleaned), if needed
- a small, zip-up bag for your clothes and other items
- a reusable water bottle - staff will refill it with filtered water.

Before your surgery, take off all jewellery and piercings. Please leave valuables at home.

Q. Can I still have surgery if I have my period?

A. Yes. Please bring your sanitary pads or period underwear. Don't use tampons or menstrual cups.

On the day

Q. Who will I see on the day of surgery?

A. You'll meet a member of the surgical team, an anaesthetic doctor and the day surgery nurses.

Q. Can I get a medical certificate for myself and a carers certificate for my support person?

A. Yes. Please ask your treating team on the day of surgery.

Q. Where can I collect my medicines at the hospital?

A. You can collect your medicines at the Royal Women's Hospital Pharmacy on Level 1. You must pay for all medicines on the day.

After surgery

Q. How much time will I need to take off work?

A. It depends on your surgery, recovery, any complications, and the kind of work you do. Your nurse can help you if you need more information.

On the day of your surgery, your doctor will give you a medical certificate for time off work. If you need more time, speak to your GP.

Support services

Q. What if I need extra support?

A. Please tell us if you:

- have a disability
- need an interpreter or other cultural support.

Visit our website to find out more about our support services: thewomens.org.au/patients-visitors/clinics-and-services/support-services

Do you need an interpreter?



Interpreter

You can ask for an interpreter if you need one.

Family Violence Support

1800 Respect National Helpline

You can get help if you have experienced sexual assault, domestic or family violence and abuse.

You can call any time of day or night.

1800 737 732

1800respect.org.au