

Your surgery guide

What to expect before, during and after surgery



the women's
the royal women's hospital

Please read this guide carefully. It explains what you need to do:

- while you are waiting for your surgery
- in the week before your surgery
- after your surgery, to help you recover safely.

Following these steps will help you get ready for your surgery and support a faster, smoother recovery.

This guide provides general information only. It is not intended to replace information given to you by your care team. Your surgeon or anaesthetist may give you specific instructions based on your individual needs.

Always follow the advice given to you by your care team.

Step 1: Get ready for surgery (prehabilitation)

Prehabilitation means getting your body and mind ready for surgery.

Surgery can put stress on the body, so it is important to build up your fitness and strength beforehand.

Preparing early can help you:

- recover faster
- reduce muscle loss
- have a smoother recovery.

How to prepare

1. Learn about your surgery

Knowing what to expect can help you feel more confident and less worried before your surgery.

You should:

- talk to your surgeon about the operation
- ask questions if anything is unclear
- review the Women's surgery preparation materials you were given.

2. Exercise and stay active

Staying active before surgery helps your muscles and body stay strong. Try to:

- move every day if you can
- increase your activity slowly
- keep track of what you do.

Types of exercise

Aerobic exercises for your heart and lung health. You can try:

- walking
- running
- swimming.

Strength exercises, to build muscle. You can use:

- light weights
- resistance bands.

Flexibility and balance exercises, improve movement and help prevent falls. Try:

- Pilates
- yoga
- stretching.

3. Eat and drink well

Eating healthy food and drinking enough water before your surgery can help you recover.

Try to eat a mix of these foods:

Protein helps your body repair itself. Good sources of protein include:

- chicken
- fish
- eggs
- beans
- dairy
- tofu.

Vitamins and minerals help with wound healing and overall health. Try to eat:

- vegetables and fruit
- nuts.

Healthy fats can help reduce swelling.

Include:

- olive oil
- nuts and seeds
- fatty fish, like salmon, tuna or herring.

Water supports healing and wellbeing. Drink plenty of water every day.

Avoid:

- alcohol
- smoking
- herbal supplements (check with your doctor).

Follow medical advice

Your surgeon or anaesthetist may give you specific instructions before your surgery.

Always follow their advice.

Step 2: Preparing for your surgery

One week before surgery

- Review the surgery preparation materials.
- Start taking a stool softener, such as Movicol, to help prevent constipation before your surgery.

The day before surgery

- Eat light meals.
- Avoid greasy or heavy foods.
- Please follow the fasting instructions you have been given.

Stop eating solid foods 6 hours before your surgery.

What you can drink while fasting

When you are fasting from solid food, you may sip up to 200 ml of clear liquids each hour.

Clear liquids include:

- water
- clear apple juice
- black tea or black coffee (no milk).

Avoid:

- drinks with milk
- juices with pulp or pith
- gelatine-based drinks
- any fluids with fibre.

Follow medical advice

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Always follow their advice.

Fasting and GLP-1 medicines

If you take a GLP-1 medicine for diabetes or weight management, you must follow a stricter fasting plan.

24 hours before surgery

Drink **clear liquids only** for the entire 24 hours.

You can drink:

- water
- clear apple juice
- black tea or black coffee
- clear stock or broth (no meat, noodles or vegetables).

6 hours before surgery

- **stop all drinks**, including water.

Step 3: After your surgery

Your hospital stay

After your surgery, you will begin your recovery on our surgical ward. We will review your progress and prepare you for discharge.

Your surgeon will talk with you about how many nights you may need to stay in hospital.

Going home

Discharge criteria

Before going home, you must be able to:

- eat food
- drink fluids
- move around by yourself
- empty your bladder
- get dressed on your own.

You will only be discharged home when it is safe, and you meet all discharge criteria.

Medicines

Your surgeon may give you prescriptions for medicines to take at home. Make sure you understand how and when to take them.

Medical certificates

Ask for your medical and carers certificates before you go home.

Follow-up

You will have an appointment with your surgeon around 6 to 8 weeks after your surgery.

Recovering at home

Eating after surgery

Eating well helps your body heal. Try to eat a mix of these foods.

Protein:

- chicken
- fish
- eggs
- beans
- dairy
- tofu.

Fibre:

- whole grains
- fruits
- vegetables
- legumes, like beans, lentils, chickpeas.

Anti-inflammatory foods:

- fatty fish, like salmon, tuna or herring
- leafy greens
- berries
- turmeric
- ginger.

Fluids:

- water
- herbal tea
- broths.

Avoid drinks with a lot of sugar or caffeine.

If you don't feel hungry, try eating small meals more often.

Other important information

For the first 3 nights after surgery

- Take regular, simple pain relief medicines such as paracetamol or ibuprofen, if you can take these medicines
- Use stronger pain relief if simple pain medicine doesn't relieve your pain

For the first 7 nights after surgery

- Take 1 to 2 sachets of Movicol each day if you are constipated.
- Wear your TED (compression) stockings.

Questions

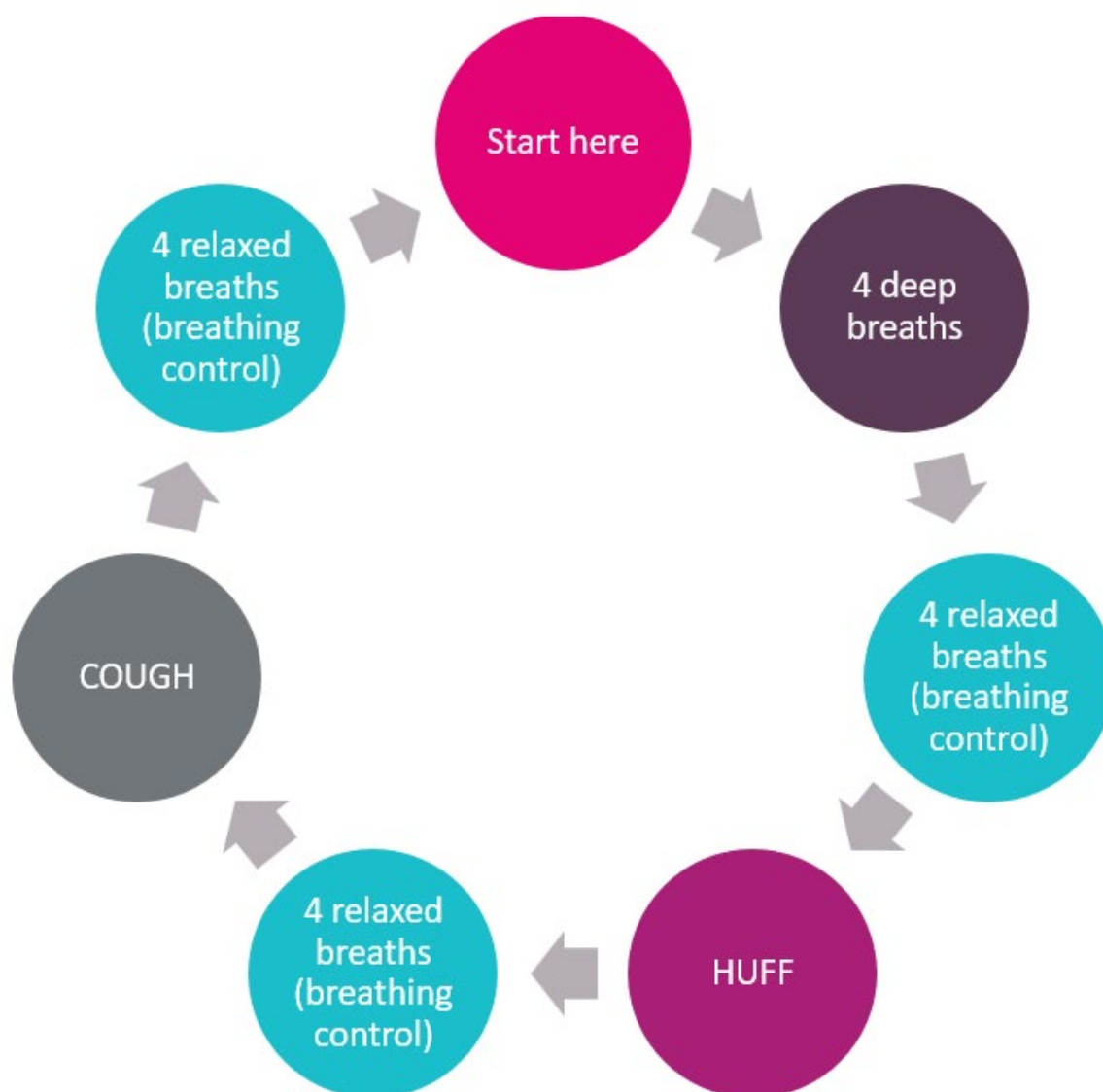
- If you have any questions after discharge, please call 5 North on (03) 8345 3533.

Breathing exercises

Keep your lungs healthy and reduce the risk of chest infections

Do your deep breathing and coughing exercises **4 times a day**:

- **2 times** in the morning
- **2 times** at night.



More information

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Questions?

We are committed to supporting you before, during and after your surgery.

If you have any questions, please contact your surgical or nursing team.

Contact us

The Royal Women's Hospital

T: (03) 8345 2000 – Main Hospital

T: (03) 8345 3300 – Day Surgery Unit

T: (03) 8345 3376 – ERAS Clinic

T: (03) 8345 3533 – 5 North

Do you need an 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

Disclaimer: This fact sheet provides general information only. For specific advice about your healthcare needs, you should seek advice from your health professional. The Royal Women's Hospital does not accept any responsibility for loss or damage arising from your reliance on this fact sheet instead of seeing a health professional. If you require urgent medical attention, please contact your nearest emergency department.

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