

Gynecological Cancer-Abdominal Surgery: Preparing for Your Surgery

Most women facing gynecological cancer surgery have some fear and anxiety. This sheet will answer common questions and tell you what to expect. This is general information on what will happen before, during and after your surgery. Everyone is different. The care you get from your doctor and nurses will change to meet your needs. **Please ask your health care team questions whenever you need to.**

Physical Exam and Testing Before Your Surgery

Before your surgery you will need a physical exam. This will be done in the hospital or doctor's office. A nurse or other medical person will ask you questions about your health. You will also be asked about allergies. Don't think any information or question is too small or embarrassing. It is best to let your medical team know about any concerns you have and to ask questions.

You will have tests done to check your blood. Your doctor may also order a chest x-ray and electrocardiogram (EKG). During this visit, you will be given instructions about what you'll need to do before your surgery.

It's a good idea to ask your surgeon about any medicines you are taking. Some medicines cause bleeding during surgery. Most of these medicines are listed below. If you are taking any of these, talk to your surgeon to see if you should stop taking them before your surgery:

- **Aspirin**
- **Drugs that contain Aspirin (Anacin®, Bufferin®, Excedrin®, Bayer®, etc, Some Alka Seltzer® cold products, Ascriptin®, Darvon®, Ecotrin®, Fiorinal®, Midol®, Percodan®, Sine-off®, Vanquish®).**
- **If you are taking any over the counter medication check the ingredients to see if it contains aspirin.**
- **Non-Steroidal Anti-inflammatory agents (Advil®, Aleve®, Anaprox® Cataflam®, Celcoxib, Clinoril®, Dolobid®, Feldene®, Ibuprofen, Indocin®, Medipren®, Motrin®, Midol® (contains Ibuprofen), Nalfon®, Naprosyn®, Nurprin® Refecoxib, Relafen®, Rufen®, Tolectin®, Toradol®, Trilisate®, Voltarin®).**
- **Other medicines that may cause bleeding: Coumadin®, Heparin, Persantine®, Trental®**
- **Be sure to let your doctor know of any herbal supplements you are taking. Some herbals have been found to act as blood thinners (gingko and garlic) or interact with medications.**

Helpful Facts

Also, if you have any questions about your insurance coverage, feel free to speak with a hospital representative or your surgeon's staff during this visit.

Informed Consent

Before your surgery, you will be asked to sign a consent form. This form makes sure that you understand the surgery and its risks.

Your surgeon will explain the surgery and its risks. Read your consent form carefully. It will have the following information:

- Type of surgery.
- Name of the doctor doing the surgery.
- Possible risks of the surgery.
- Other treatment options.

When you sign this form, it means you fully understand the type of surgery you will be having, as well as its risks and benefits.

Planning Ahead

Support on the Day of Surgery

It is a good idea to have a friend or family member with you on the day of surgery. This person can support you. You may not need physical help right after your surgery, but having someone you feel close to can make it easier. During your hospital stay, if you want a friend or relative to stay after visiting hours, talk with your nurse.

Arrangements for Going Home

You will need to have someone with you when you leave the hospital. Be sure to get a friend or relative to be with you at the time of discharge.

What to bring to the Hospital

You should pack such items as:

- Personal hygiene items such as toothbrush, toothpaste, hairbrush, deodorant, etc.
- Sleepwear
- Underwear
- Reading material
- Telephone numbers of family and friends
- Comfortable clothes to wear home—loose-fitting clothes are more comfortable and will hide any tube you may have

Helpful Facts

Since there is not much room to keep your belongings in the Ambulatory Surgery Unit (APU), they should be left with your support person or brought to the hospital after your surgery.

You should not wear any jewelry, makeup or contact lenses. Do not bring credit cards, cash, or checkbook. Eyeglasses may be needed to read and sign forms. Dental bridges or dentures can be worn and removed just before your surgery.

The Day Before Surgery

One working day before your surgery, between 5:00 PM and 7:00 PM you will get a telephone call from the Ambulatory Surgery Unit. **If you do not get a call by 7:00 PM, call the Ambulatory Surgery Unit at (215) 662-6450.** During this call, you will be given information regarding where and what time to arrive on the day of surgery.

The Night Before and Morning of Your Surgery

You must follow the list below or your surgery may be cancelled:

- Do not eat any solid food after 8:00 PM the night before surgery
- Do not drink anything after midnight, except to take your medicine.
- Use only a sip or two of water to take any medicines your doctor orders.
- IF you smoke, try to stop smoking once surgery is scheduled.
- Take your insulin, diabetes medicine or blood pressure medicines as directed by your doctor/nurse.

The Day of Your Surgery

Parking

Valet parking is available at the main hospital entrance (Ravdin Building entrance) on 3400 Spruce Street beginning at 6:00 AM. We encourage you to use the valet service since it makes parking easier.

Once in the Ravdin Building, take the escalator to the 1st floor and go straight past the information desk. The ramp to The Admission Center (TAC) is in front of you.

If you enter the hospital from the bridge that connects Penn Tower Hotel and the hospital, go across the bridge and down the ramp into the hospital. The Admission Center will be on your left.

Immediately Prior to Surgery

After you check in at The Admission Center, you will be directed to the Ambulatory Surgery Unit on the fourth (4th) floor of the Ravdin Building.

At the Ambulatory Surgery Unit (APU)

Tell your nurse if you have had any changes in your health - such as a cold, fever, or diarrhea - since your exam before surgery.

Helpful Facts

Changing Into a Gown: At this point, you will be taken to a dressing room to change into a hospital gown.

Waiting Areas: Your family will be directed to wait in the Surgical Waiting Area, which is located on the second (2nd) floor of the Dulles Building. Your surgeon will keep them informed of how you are doing. We encourage families to visit other parts of the hospital or the campus while they are waiting. If they do leave the waiting area, we ask that they check-in with the receptionist before leaving and when they return.

There are patient representatives located in The Admission Center (TAC), the Ambulatory Surgery Unit (APU), and the Surgical Waiting Area. They are there to help you and your family during your stay.

Anesthesia: Once you have changed into a gown, you may be offered medicine to relax you. An intravenous (IV) needle will be placed in your arm. This is for anesthesia, other medicines and fluids. Then you will be taken to the Operating Room.

The Operating Room

In the operating room you will be helped on to a table. If you've never been in an operating room before, all the equipment and activity can be disturbing.

You'll see a lot of people you've never met before. There may be a lot of noise as members of the surgical team talk to each other and set up equipment. Your surgeon may come in to say hello. If you feel cold, ask for a blanket.

Much of the equipment you see is there to take care of you:

- A blood pressure cuff will be placed on your arm.
- Wires from an electrocardiograph (EKG) machine will be put on your chest and shoulders to check your heart rate.
- A finger clip will check the oxygen in your blood and anesthesia.
- As needed, compression boots or stockings may be placed on your lower legs to help circulation. These may feel strange, but should not be uncomfortable.
- Your abdomen will be shaved and prepared for surgery.
- The anesthesiologist will give medicines through your IV tube.
- A tube may be placed in your throat after you are asleep to help you breath

If anyone is doing something that you don't understand, please ask. Once you are asleep, your surgery will begin.

4/02

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