

It is very important for you to tell your doctor about the medicines that you are taking and any allergies that you may have. Write down this information and show it to your doctor.

Medicine	What is it for?	When do you take it?

Allergies

References:

Department of Veterans Affairs National Center for Patient Safety. *Understanding your surgery: Ensuring correct surgery.* 2003

Australian Council for Safety and Quality in Health Care. *10 tips for safer health care: What everyone needs to know.* 2003

Further Information

Copies of Council publications or further information on the work of the Council including upcoming events and consultations is available at

www.safetyandquality.org

or by contacting:

The Australian Council for Safety and Quality in Health Care (MDP 46)

GPO Box 9848
 Canberra ACT 2601

Phone: 61 2 6289 4244
 Fax: 61 2 6289 8470
 Email: safetyandquality@health.gov.au



This Protocol has been adapted with kind permission from the Department of Veterans Affairs National Center for Patient Safety (USA) Directive on Ensuring Correct Surgery.

Understanding Your Surgery



Ensuring Correct Surgery

This pamphlet will help you to understand what will happen before your surgery and how your doctors and nurses are taking steps to make sure that everything goes as planned.

Days to a couple of hours before your surgery.....

Review all of the information on the Consent Form before you sign it. If you are not sure about anything, ask the staff.



You, or your guardian, must sign a consent form before any surgery can take place. It should be written in words that you can understand.

Many of your questions will be answered by reading the consent form. Here are some good questions to ask in order to better understand your procedures:

1. What is the name of the procedure that will be done?

2. Where or what body part will be operated on? (Write down if it is the left or right side, if needed.)

3. Are there any alternatives to surgery?

4. What are the risks of this surgery?

5. What is likely to happen if I don't have the surgery?

6. Who is in charge of the surgical team? (Write the name here.)

7. About how long will it take to recover after the surgery?

8. Will there be any side-effects?

The doctor or other member of the surgical team may need to make a mark with a pen on the part of your body where the surgery will happen. This should be done **BEFORE** you go into the operating room.



Some doctors will sign their name or initials. Some doctors will make an "X" or "Yes" mark on the correct body part.

Check that the mark does not rub off. It will be very important for the doctors and nurses to see the mark before the surgery commences. Tell your doctor or nurse if the mark rubs or washes off before the surgery.

An hour, or less, before the surgery...

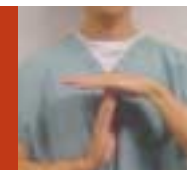


Before the surgery, a doctor or nurse will ask you to say your name, date of birth and the part of your body that will be operated on.

Don't be alarmed by these questions; the staff know who you are. This is how they make sure they have everything just right.



Just before the surgery begins...



Just before the surgery begins, everyone in the treatment room will take a short "team time out" and check for the last time that they have the right patient and are doing the right operation on the right body part. You may be asleep for this part.

The doctors and nurses are taking these important steps to make sure that everything goes as planned for your surgery.

