**Follow-up appointments after going home**

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<tr>
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**Before you leave the hospital:**
- appointments will be made for you, or
- information about making appointments will be reviewed

**My questions**

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**Your Heart Surgery**

Reading this guide will help you get ready for your heart surgery.

The morning of your heart surgery you will be admitted to the Hamilton General Hospital, 237 Barton Street East, Hamilton.

Before you come to the hospital, you will need to do some things at home to get ready.

Please follow these instructions. If you have questions about your visit or need to change your appointment, call your surgeon's office.

If you have any questions, call your surgeon's office.
1 to 2 weeks before your surgery

- Prepare frozen meals and have a supply of groceries before your surgery so they are readily available after your surgery.
- Arrange to have someone pick you up before 9:00 a.m. the day you leave the hospital. Expect to leave the hospital 4 to 5 days after your surgery. Recovery time varies from person to person.
- If you live alone, you are advised to have a family member or friend stay with you for 2 weeks after your surgery. Most patients are not eligible for home services from the Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant Local Health Integrated Network or HNHB LHIN, formerly called CCAC.
- You may wish to go to a retirement home for 2 weeks after your surgery to have help while you recover. There is a cost for this type of care. Call your local HNHB LHIN office for information about this, as you will need to make these arrangements before your surgery.
- If you are a caregiver for your spouse or disabled child, you may be eligible for home services. Call the local HNHB LHIN office for information.
- You will not be able to drive for 4 to 6 weeks after your surgery, or advised by your surgeon. Make plans to have someone pick you up from the hospital when you are ready to go home, take you to doctor appointments until you are able to drive yourself, and do errands for you.
- Women should pack a bra size 1 size larger, to wear after surgery, so it feels comfortable around your chest.

Going home

When you go home:

- Arrange to have someone bring in your clothes and shoes one or two days before you go home.
- You will not be able to drive or sit behind an air bag for 4 to 6 weeks, or as advised by your surgeon.
- You may find holding a pillow against your chest for support helpful when you are travelling in a car. Arrange to have a pillow for your ride home.
- You will need to keep active using the exercise guidelines you learned on 5 South. Help from your family and friends is encouraged.
- When you are at home, you may have questions about:
  - your medications
  - any aches, pain or discomfort
  - your activity guidelines
  - your incisions
  - what to expect with normal healing

Once you are home, if you have any questions call your family doctor or a nurse clinician at the Cardiac Health and Rehabilitation Centre at 905-577-8033.
After your surgery

Days after your surgery | Where you will be
--- | ---
Day 1 to 2 | Intensive Care Unit (ICU West)
While you are in the ICU:
• you will be closely watched by the health care team.
• machines will record your heart rhythm and blood pressure.
• you will not be able to talk while you have a breathing tube in your throat.
• you will be given medication for pain.
• the health care team will help you roll in bed, sit up, take deep breaths and cough.
• most of the tubes will be removed before you leave the ICU.
• have a family member bring your hearing aids, glasses and dentures, and personal care items such as hairbrush, toothbrush, toothpaste, deodorant and shaving supplies.

Day 1 to 5 | 5 South
While you are on 5 South:
• your heart rhythm will be monitored.
• the health care team will help you to sit up in a chair, walk to the bathroom and take deep breaths and cough.
• you will start drinking fluids and eating food.
• medications to help reduce pain will be continued.
• family members can bring your robe, pyjamas and non-slip footwear.

As you progress on 5 South:
• you will be encouraged to walk in the hall.
• the health care team will review your medications, incision care and follow-up tests with you.
• you will be given the book, “Path to Recovery After Heart Surgery” that contains information for recovering at home.

To also help prepare you for going home, you are encouraged to attend a discharge class. Your family is also encouraged to attend this class.

The night before your surgery

• You may eat and drink until 12:00 midnight.
• After midnight, you cannot have anything to eat or drink. This includes sucking candies and chewing gum. You can take sips of water to take your medications the morning of your surgery.
• You will need to have 2 packages of chlorhexidine scrub sponges. You can buy the sponges at the West End Urgent Care Centre, 690 Main Street West, Hamilton (this is where your Pre-op Clinic appointment was).
• The night before surgery and the morning of surgery, wash and rinse your hair first using your normal shampoo. Make sure you completely rinse the shampoo from your hair and body.
• Wash your body with regular soap. Make sure you completely rinse off the soap from your body.
• Now begin using one of the scrub sponges you purchased. Wash the shaded areas as shown on the diagram, nipple to nipple, collar bone down to umbilicus, both wrists, inside of both legs and both groins. Avoid scrubbing your skin too hard.
• Never use the sponge near your eyes.
• Once you have completed the scrub, rinse the soap solution off your body completely.
• Pat yourself dry with a clean freshly washed towel. DO NOT apply any powders, deodorants or lotions.
• Dress with freshly washed clothes.
The morning of your surgery

- Wash your body with the 2nd scrub sponge, as you did the night before.
- Remove contact lenses, make-up, nail polish, earrings and all other jewellery.
- Do not eat or drink.
- Take any medications as listed on the yellow medication sheet.

The day of your surgery

- We will need to know where to contact your family while you are in hospital. If your family is from out-of-town, bring information where they are staying and a phone number to contact them.

The day of your surgery (continued)

Come to the: Hamilton General Hospital
237 Barton Street East
Hamilton, Ontario

- If you cannot walk a long distance, wheelchairs are located near the Information Desk at the main entrance.
- Go to Patient Registration on the Main Level.
- After you have registered, you will go to Same Day Surgery on the Main Level. Patient Registration staff will direct you.
- Your family can stay with you while you wait for your surgery.
- The average length of time for your surgery is 4 to 6 hours, unless you have been told otherwise by your surgeon.
- You will be taken to the ICU West after your surgery.
- The surgeon will talk to your family about the surgery after it is done.
The morning of your surgery

- Wash your body with the 2nd scrub sponge, as you did the night before.
- Remove contact lenses, make-up, nail polish, earrings and all other jewellery.
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The day of your surgery (continued)

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- If you cannot walk a long distance, wheelchairs are located near the Information Desk at the main entrance.
- Go to Patient Registration on the Main Level.
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- Your family can stay with you while you wait for your surgery.
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5 South

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- After midnight, you cannot have anything to eat or drink. This includes sucking candies and chewing gum. You can take sips of water to take your medications the morning of your surgery.
- Use the Dulcolax® suppository at 7:30 p.m.
- You will need to have 2 packages of chlorhexidine scrub sponges. You can buy the sponges at the hospital pharmacy.
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