



Your Urgent Heart Surgery

You need to have urgent heart surgery. This guide will help you and your family get ready for your heart surgery and prepare for going home afterwards.

Most patients attend the Pre-Op Clinic and prepare for their surgery at home. You and your family will not be attending the clinic. You may be in the hospital waiting for your surgery, or you may be at home and your surgeon has decided to move your surgery ahead.

You and your family can do these things to prepare for going home after surgery:

- 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 Community Care Access Centre (CCAC), formerly called Home Care.
 - If you are concerned about the amount of support at home, ask to talk to a social worker.
 - If you are a caregiver for your spouse or disabled child, you may be eligible for home services. This is important to tell your nurse now. The nurse will follow up with the CCAC.
 - If you live alone, you may wish to go to a retirement home for 2 weeks after your surgery to have help as you recover. There is a cost for this service. If you are interested in this, tell your nurse now.
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- You will need to make plans to have a family member or friend do errands or take you to doctor appointments until you are able to drive yourself. You will not be able to drive for 4 to 6 weeks or as advised by your surgeon.
- Have a family member or friend arrange frozen prepared meals and a supply of groceries for when you go home after your surgery.
- Arrange to have someone bring in your clothes and shoes the day before you leave the hospital.
- The day you leave the hospital, arrange to have someone arrive before 9:00 a.m. to help you prepare for discharge.
- Expect to leave the hospital 3 to 5 days after your surgery.

Admission to the Hamilton General Hospital

- If you are in another hospital, you may be moved to the Hamilton General Hospital, 1 to 2 days before your surgery.
 - You may not meet your cardiac surgeon until the evening before your surgery.
 - You will also meet your anesthetist when you are at the Hamilton General Hospital.
 - If you are coming from home, please bring all of your medications in their original containers from the Pharmacy with you to the hospital. If you are already in hospital, the nurses caring for you will give us this list.
 - Bring your Health Card and any other health insurance information.
 - A family member or friend will be asked to go to the Admitting Department.
 - Bring a robe, pyjamas and slippers to use until you go for surgery. Your family will be asked to take these items home when you go for surgery. They can bring them back after your surgery when you are on 5 South.
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- Your personal care items should include a hairbrush, toothbrush, toothpaste, deodorant and shaving supplies. You will need these items throughout your hospital stay. Your family need to bring these items to the hospital as soon as they can.
- Do not bring jewellery, money or credit cards to the hospital.
- Women should also bring a bra one size larger, to wear after surgery, so it feels comfortable around your chest. If you are in hospital, please ask a friend or family member to do this.
- 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.
- We ask that you have only 1 to 2 visitors at one time. There may be times when visitors are asked to leave a patient's room because of the needs of the patient.

The day before your surgery

- You and your family may watch a video about Heart Surgery.
 - You will have blood tests, a urine test, an ECG and chest X-ray taken. If these have been done recently, they may not be needed.
 - A nurse or Health Care Aide will shave you for the surgery.
 - After the shave you will be asked to shower or be bathed with a scrub sponge.
 - You will be asked to remove any nail polish.
 - You will be given a suppository in the evening.
 - 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 with your medications the morning of your surgery.
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The morning of your surgery

- You will be asked to shower or be bathed again, with another scrub sponge.
- You will be asked to remove contact lenses, make-up, earrings, all other jewellery and any prosthesis.
- Do not eat or drink.
- Your nurse will give you any medications you need, with small sips of water.
- An intravenous will be started if you do not have one.
- Your family can stay with you in the Patient Reception area, until you go into the operating room.

Your surgery

- The average time for your surgery is 4 to 6 hours, unless you have been told otherwise by your surgeon.
 - The operating room is on the 3rd floor.
 - There is a waiting room for families on the 3rd floor.
 - 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.
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After your surgery

	Day 1	Day 2 to 3	Day 4 to 5
Where you will stay	Intensive Care Unit (ICU West)	Cardiac Surgical Unit (5 South)	Cardiac Surgical Unit (5 South)
Tests and procedures	<p>Monitors will record your heart rhythm and blood pressure.</p> <p>You will not be able to talk while you have a breathing tube in your throat.</p> <p>Most of your tubes will be removed before you leave the ICU.</p>	<p>A smaller monitor called a telemetry will continue to record your heart rhythm and blood pressure. You will wear this monitor and will be able to move around the unit.</p> <p>You may have your blood sugar tested often.</p> <p>You will have other blood work drawn daily until you are discharged home.</p> <p>The rest of your tubes will be removed.</p>	<p>You may still be on a heart monitor.</p> <p>You will have an electrocardiogram (ECG) on day 4.</p> <p>You will have a chest x-ray on day 4.</p>
Medications	Pain control medication will be given through your intravenous or IV.	<p>Pain control medications will be continued and are given by mouth.</p> <p>You will be started on other medications as ordered by your surgeon. These will be explained to you.</p>	<p>Regular doses of pain medication are stopped, but pain control medication will still be available when you need it. You are encouraged to ask for it.</p> <p>Your medications will be adjusted to your needs before you go home.</p>

	Day 1	Day 2 to 3	Day 4 to 5
Diet	You will start a clear fluid diet once your breathing tube is removed.	You will start a full fluid diet and by day 3 you may be on solid foods.	By day 3 you should be on a Healthy Heart diet, which will address any other nutrition concerns you may have.
Activity	The health care team will help you: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • roll in bed • sit up in bed or a chair • dangle your legs • take deep breaths and cough 	The health care team will help you: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sit up in a chair • walk to the bathroom • take deep breaths and cough • take short walks in the hallway 	During this time you will find you are able to get around more on your own. You are encouraged to move about your room and in the hallway by yourself. If you are unable to do this, members of the health care team will help you.
Daily routine with your nurse	<p>Your vital signs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • blood pressure • heart rate • breathing rate • temperature <p>Your vital signs are checked every 4 hours or more often if needed. A full assessment is done every 12 hours or more if needed.</p> <p>A full assessment includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • changing your dressing if needed • cleaning your incision • listening to your chest, heart and abdomen • moving your arms and legs <p>Your weight is measured daily.</p>	<p>Your vital signs are checked every 8 hours or more often if needed. A full assessment is done every 12 hours or more if needed.</p> <p>Your weight is measured daily.</p>	<p>Your vital signs are checked every 12 hours or more often if needed. A full assessment is done every 12 hours or more if needed.</p> <p>Your weight is measured daily.</p>

	Day 1	Day 2 to 5
Teaching	<p>This first day after surgery can be overwhelming for patients and families. The health care team will explain what you need to know as the day progresses.</p>	<p>Your health care team will review your learning needs every day to make sure that you have all of the information you need before you go home.</p> <p>Group classes are offered in the sunroom during the week covering these topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Activity” taught by the Occupational Therapist and Physiotherapist • “Diet” taught by the Dietitian • “Medications” taught by the Pharmacist • “Caring for Yourself After Discharge” taught by the Nurses in the Cardiac Health and Rehabilitation Centre. <p>Your family is welcome to attend the classes. The dates and time are posted on a board on the ward.</p>
What to expect next as you prepare to leave the hospital	<p>Planning for your discharge begins early in your stay.</p>	<p>A plan for discharge will be discussed with you and your family.</p> <p>You will be assessed daily to determine your needs at home.</p> <p>Ask your surgeon if you can sit behind an airbag in a car.</p> <p>Most doctor’s appointments are made for you depending on where you live.</p> <p>An information card with doctor’s appointments and medications is given to you before you leave the hospital.</p> <p>At these visits ask your doctor when you may return to activities such as driving your car and returning to work.</p>

Going home

When you go home:

- 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.
- Arrange to have someone bring in your clothes 1 or 2 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 will need to keep active using the exercise guidelines you learned in class. Help from your family and friends is encouraged.
- When you are at home, you may have questions about:
 - your medications
 - any aches, pain or discomforts
 - your activity guidelines
 - your incisions
 - what to expect with normal healing

If you have questions or concerns, please call your family doctor or a nurse clinician at the Cardiac Health and Rehabilitation Centre at 905-577-8033.

Follow-up appointments after going home

Time in weeks	Appointment
1 week	Family Doctor
2 to 3 weeks	Cardiologist
6 to 8 weeks	Cardiovascular Surgeon
6 to 8 weeks	Cardiac Health and Rehabilitation Centre

Before you leave the hospital:

- appointments will be made for you, or
- information about making appointments will be reviewed