

# Getting healthy before your surgery

If you are as healthy as possible you will do better from your surgery and have an easier recovery. Some health conditions can cause your surgery to be delayed or cancelled.

There are lots of things you can do to improve your health while you wait for your surgery.



## See your GP

Your GP can help you get fit for surgery.



It's a good idea to book an appointment as soon as possible if you know you will be having surgery.



## Medication

Taking your regular medications properly before surgery can improve your health and surgery outcomes.



- Ask your GP for an up-to-date list of all your medications.
- If needed, your GP can refer you for a review of your medications with your Pharmacist.



## Mental Health

It is normal to feel anxious before your surgery. There is help available.



- You can ask any member of your health care team any questions that may be worrying you.
- You can ask your GP for a Mental Health Plan. This will give you up to 10 sessions with a psychologist that you can claim on Medicare.



You can call the NSW Mental Health Line, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.  
**Phone 1800 011 511.**





## Check Your Iron Levels



Having enough iron in your blood, can reduce your risk of needing a blood transfusion and your risk of infection. If your iron is low, your GP can prescribe iron tablets.

- Ask your GP about a blood test to check your blood count and iron levels.



## Do you have diabetes?



• Ask your GP to check your Hba1c. This is a measure of the amount of sugar in your blood over the past three months. It tells us if your body is processing sugar as it should be.

- Your doctor can give you ways to reduce your Hba1c if necessary.



## Heart Health



• If you have had a heart condition you need to have seen your heart specialist in the last 12 months before your surgery.

- If you have a pacemaker or defibrillator you need to have had this checked in the 12 months before your surgery.

**⚠ Please bring this information from your specialist with you to the pre-operative clinic.**



## Weight



If you are overweight you are at higher risk of problems during surgery like infection, difficulty breathing, and blood clots in your legs and lungs.

There are some things you can do at home:

- **Eat mostly healthy foods and limit unhealthy foods.** Try to eat meals that are full of vegetables, whole grains, fruit, lean meats or fish, tofu or beans and low fat dairy. Drink plenty of water and avoid soft drinks that are full of sugar.
- **Do plenty of physical activity and exercise.** If you have constant hip or knee pain, you may not be as active as you were before. Low-impact activities like swimming or biking will put less strain on your joints. They will still be effective in helping you lose weight.



NSW Health has a free confidential telephone service that can help you to achieve and maintain a healthy weight. Phone **Get Healthy** on **1300 806 258**.



## Smoking

Smoking puts strain on your heart and increases your chance of blood clots. It also makes it harder for you to breathe and increases your risk of infection. If you stop smoking you will **get better faster after** your surgery.

**⚠ Doctors recommend that you stop smoking at least 8 weeks before your surgery.**



**Helping U 2 Quit** is a free program for people who are thinking about quitting smoking. They run clinics and group sessions. To find out more call **(07) 5506 7010**.



**Quitline** can help you stop smoking. Call **13 78 48** or go to **<http://www.quit.org.au>**



**My QuitBuddy** app can also help you to become smoke free.



## Alcohol



**⚠️ Do not drink alcohol for at least 24 hours before your anaesthetic.**

- Alcohol stops your body healing well and can increase your resistance to anaesthetic. Having more than 2 drinks a day, or more than 4 at one time can put you at risk.
- Speak to your GP for ideas to help reduce your alcohol intake.



**Get Healthy** can also help. Phone **1300 806 258**.



## Other things to think about



General anaesthetic, sedation and strong painkillers are a risk for people with untreated sleep apnoea. They can affect your breathing after surgery.

If you snore, is it possible you have Obstructive Sleep Apnoea? Talk to your GP if you tick three or more of the following:

- I snore loudly enough to be heard through closed doors
- I often feel tired or sleepy during the daytime, such as falling asleep during driving or talking to someone?
- I have stopped breathing or choke or gasp during my sleep
- I am being treated for high blood pressure
- I am overweight
- I am more than 50 years old
- My shirt collar is larger than 43cm (men) and 41cm (women)
- I am male

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