

# I've been given a date for my elective surgery – what happens next?



This information covers frequently asked questions the NSW Health Surgery Access Line receives from people who:

- are on a waitlist for elective surgery at a New South Wales (NSW) public hospital **and**
- have had their date for surgery confirmed.

If you want to join a waitlist for elective surgery, please read our fact sheet: [How do I join an elective surgery waitlist at a NSW public hospital?](#)

If you are already on a waitlist but do not have a confirmed date for your surgery, please read our fact sheet: [I've been waitlisted for elective surgery – what happens next?](#)

## When will the hospital contact me with a date for my surgery?

The hospital Admissions Office will contact you by phone and send you a letter up to six weeks before your scheduled surgery date.

The hospital will try to give you plenty of advance notice of your surgery date. However, sometimes shorter notice is given if, for example, a space becomes available because another patient's surgery is unexpectedly cancelled.

It's very important that you answer your phone and closely check your emails and mail in the days before your surgery.

**[Please note:** The hospital's telephone number may show up on your screen as an External Number, No Caller ID or Caller ID Blocked. This is because NSW public hospitals use large, computerised telephone systems.]

## What should I bring with me to the hospital?

Once your date for surgery is confirmed you will receive a letter letting you know what you need to bring with you to hospital. Generally, you will be advised to wear comfortable clothing and non-slip footwear. Depending on how long you will be in hospital you might also be advised to bring:

- toiletries (soap, toothpaste, toothbrush, hairbrush/comb)
- any current medication you are taking
- any glasses, hearing aids and non-electric walking aids
- all relevant letters, x-rays, scans and blood test results
- your Medicare card, private health insurance card, DVA health card or details of workers compensation.

**Please leave any valuables such as wedding rings, large amounts of cash and other personally important items at home.**

## What is a Pre-Admission Clinic appointment?

You might be asked to attend a Pre-Admission Clinic appointment. based on your general health, any medications you are taking and the surgery you will be having. The clinic will organise or advise you of any pre-surgery tests needed and will help plan your after-surgery care.

Admissions Office staff will let you know by phone, email or in writing if you need to come to a Pre-Admission Clinic appointment. Please allow at least 3 to 4 hours for this appointment. Alternatively, an appointment might be offered online (telehealth) or by phone. The admission office will let you know if this applies to your situation.

## How long will I be in hospital?

The Admissions Office will let you know if you are having day surgery or if you will need to stay in hospital overnight or longer. If you are staying in hospital, you will be taken to a hospital ward after your surgery.

If you are having day surgery, you will be sent home once you have recovered from your operation. This will usually happen 2 to 6 hours after your operation.

If you need medication to take home the hospital will organise this for you before you are discharged or will provide you a prescription to be filled at a chemist.

It's important that you organise to have someone take you home from hospital and stay with you for the first 24 hours after surgery. Please talk to your nurse if this is not possible.

## Can I drive myself home after my day surgery?

**You must not drive yourself home after surgery. It is not safe.**

The general anaesthetic or sedation you receive during surgery can affect your driving abilities. If you **don't** have a family member or friend who is able to drive you home from hospital, please let the Admissions Office know when they first contact you to confirm your surgery.

## What happens if my surgery is delayed before or on the day of surgery?

Surgical delays can happen before or on the day of your operation for different reasons. For example, it is sometimes necessary to delay booked surgery to make way for a patient with a life-threatening condition. Your surgery time may also change throughout the day for similar reasons.

If you have already been admitted to hospital, please talk to the hospital staff about what happens next and about any concerns you have. If you have not been admitted to hospital, please phone the Admissions Office at your referred hospital for further advice.

## What happens if I need to delay my surgery?

You may need to delay your surgery for personal or social reasons, for example, a holiday or work commitments. If you have a confirmed date for hospital admission and need to delay your surgery, please contact the Admissions Office at your referred hospital as soon as possible. You can delay your surgery a maximum of two times for personal or social reasons.

## Who do I contact if I get COVID-19 or have recently had it?

If you are diagnosed with COVID-19 or have recently had it, please call the hospital Admissions Office at your referred hospital. Staff will confirm what if any changes need to be made to your surgery and admission date.

## Who do I contact if I'm feeling unwell before my surgery?

If you become unwell within 3 business days of your surgery, please call the Admissions Office team at your referred hospital. They will ask your surgeon for advice about whether your surgery can go ahead or if it needs to be delayed until you are feeling better.

## What if I need an interpreter?

Professional health care interpreters (including Auslan interpreters) are available to help you. There is no charge for this service. If you or a relative need an interpreter service, the Admissions Office team or hospital staff will telephone the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) on 131 450 on your behalf.

## Who do I contact for help once I have been discharged from the hospital?

When you are discharged from the hospital, you will be given a discharge summary or an instruction sheet. This will include information about any medication and pain relief you are given, and any dietary requirements, follow-up appointments or other instructions. If you have any other questions or concerns after you leave hospital, contact your general practitioner (GP).

**If you need urgent medical care or are experiencing a medical emergency, call 000 or go to your nearest emergency department.**

## For more information

For more information about your surgery, please call the Admissions Office at your referred hospital.

[Contact your referred hospital – Healthdirect website](#)