



# YOUR SURGERY

Information for patients and their families.



**Black River**  
MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

711 West Adams Street, Black River Falls, WI 54615  
715-284-5361 | [www.brmh.net](http://www.brmh.net)



**Thank you** for choosing Black River Memorial Hospital for your surgical and healthcare needs. This booklet provides information you will need to prepare for your surgery. If we have been unable to reach you by the day before your surgery, please call Surgical Services, Monday through Friday (8 a.m. - 12 p.m.) and ask to talk to a nurse.

**Surgical Services direct line: (715) 284-3678**

Black River Memorial Hospital provides inpatient and outpatient surgery.

**Outpatient Surgery (same day surgery):**

Patients have surgery and are discharged home the same day. Occasionally your surgeon may wish to have you remain in the hospital overnight for observation.

**Inpatient Surgery:**

Patients are admitted to the hospital and stay in the hospital for a period of time. The length of the inpatient stay will be determined by your surgeon.

You are encouraged to take an active role in your care, education, after care planning and recovery. If at any time you have questions about your care, please ask.

**PREPARING FOR YOUR SURGERY**

Keep all your appointments before surgery. These appointments may include a history and physical, lab tests, radiology exams, and therapy appointments. Failure to keep these appointments may result in your surgery being cancelled or rescheduled.

The nurse will call you before your surgery to ask you questions about your current medications, allergies, and any health conditions you may have.

## PRE-SURGERY INSTRUCTIONS

- DO NOT EAT OR DRINK ANYTHING AFTER MIDNIGHT the day of your surgery. This includes food, water, gum and hard candy. Children must be watched closely. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in the delay or cancellation of your surgery.
- No alcoholic beverages are allowed 24 hours before surgery. Do not smoke or chew tobacco the morning of surgery.
- Call your surgeon if you have open scrapes, cuts or sores around your surgical area or anywhere on your body.
- Bathe or shower the night before and the morning of your surgery. Do not remove hair or shave near or over the surgery area. Do not apply lotions, powders or other bath products to the surgery area. Do not wear nail polish or make-up the day of surgery.
- Brush your teeth with toothpaste the day of surgery. **Remember not to swallow any water.**
- Wear clean, comfortable clothes the day of surgery.
- Remove all jewelry including body-piercing jewelry.

Black River Memorial Hospital will not be responsible for the loss, theft or damage of any valuables, including jewelry.



## Advance Directive or Living Will

You may have prepared an advance directive or living will. If you have this document and have not brought it to the hospital already, **bring it with you**. If you do not have an advance directive, you can get information from your nurse.



## Pacemaker/Internal Defibrillator

If you have a permanent pacemaker or internal defibrillator, bring your information card with you.



## **WHAT TO BRING**

Discuss bringing the following items with the pre-operative nurse:

- Cane, walker, crutches or other assistive devices, such as braces, splints or prostheses
- Glasses or contact lenses
- Hearing aids
- Breathing devices such as a C-PAP or Bi-PAP machine
- Comfortable clothing to wear home after surgery that will fit over your dressings
- All your medications in their labeled containers
- If your child is having surgery, you are encouraged to bring a favorite toy

## **DAY OF SURGERY**

Go to the reception desk in the main lobby. A member of the surgical team will meet you and bring you to surgical services.

Only one person may be in the surgery unit with you. The surgery waiting room is available for other family members and visitors. Both parents may stay with a child. One parent must stay in the hospital the entire time their child is in the building. It is recommended that you not bring young children to visit.

In the surgery unit you will be asked to verify your name and date of birth. A name band and allergy band will then be put on your wrist. You will need to read and sign the surgical consent form before having the procedure. Your vital signs will be taken and the surgical site may need to be scrubbed.

Your nurse will ask questions about your health and any recent changes. Any required pre-surgery procedures will be completed such as enemas, blood sugar tests, lab tests, x-rays, or intravenous (IV) starts. Your nurse will go through a checklist to make sure all preparations are complete.

## **ANESTHESIA**

During your procedure, anesthesia allows you to be safe and comfortable. The certified registered nurse anesthetist (CRNA) will provide your anesthesia care.

Before surgery, the CRNA will review your medical history and will ask about any health problems you may have, recent health changes, and what medications you are taking (including any remedies not prescribed by your doctor). In order to have a safe anesthetic, it is important that you follow the instructions closely regarding intake of medications, food, and beverages.

The CRNA and your doctor will help you choose the best kind of anesthesia. Many things may affect that choice, including your health, the kind of surgery you are having, and how you react to medications. Pregnant women, children, older adults, and patients with serious health conditions all require special care.

During the procedure, a CRNA will monitor and stay with you the entire time.



## TYPES OF ANESTHESIA

- **General Anesthesia:** produces a loss of sensation throughout the entire body.
- **Regional Anesthesia:** produces a loss of sensation of a specific region of the body (examples include spinal anesthesia and nerve block).
- **Local Anesthesia:** produces a loss of sensation in a small, specific area of the body.
- **Sedation:** uses a combination of medications. You may not have any memory of the procedure when you are under the effect of these medicines.

The medications that you have been given can remain in your body for up to 24 hours after their administration.

### After anesthesia – DON'T

- Drive a car for at least 24 hours.
- Operate complex equipment for at least 24 hours.
- Make any important decisions or sign any legal documents for 24 hours.
- Take any medication unless prescribed by or discussed with your surgeon.
- Drink alcohol for at least 24 hours.

### After anesthesia – DO

- Leave the hospital accompanied by a responsible adult.
- Rest quietly at home.
- Arrange for responsible adults to stay with you for the first 24 hours.
- Arrange for someone to take care of your small children for the day.



## **RECOVERY PROCESS**

The type of procedure you have and the anesthetic you receive will determine your recovery period. If you have a general anesthetic, you will be brought to the recovery room for a short time before returning to your room. If you do not have a general anesthetic, you will likely be returned directly to your room.

During your recovery period, your vital signs (blood pressure, pulse, respiration, temperature and oxygen level) will be checked often. The nurse will also check your bandages and any tubes or drains you may have. You will still have the IV in your arm.

You will probably feel some pain in the area of your surgery. Tell the nurse if you do have pain so we can help manage your it.

Depending on the type of surgery, you may have to continue with “nothing by mouth” until your doctor determines it is safe for you to eat or drink. Your diet and activity will be advanced as you can tolerate it. In most cases, you will be eating solids before you go home.

You will get instructions on how to take care of yourself at home. The surgeon’s instructions and information regarding your activity level, medications, and diet will be written down for you. The nurse will review these instructions with you before you leave.

## **WHAT TO EXPECT THE FIRST 24-48 HOURS FOLLOWING YOUR DISCHARGE**

For your safety, we require that you have a driver and someone to stay with you for the first 24 hours after leaving the hospital. You may feel weak and/or sore following your procedure. Each person is different, so healing times will vary.

- You may not feel hungry at first - this is normal
- If you have no nausea, you may try toast or crackers and slowly increase to your regular diet
- Try to drink at least 64 ounces of water each day
- Do not drink alcohol for the first 24 hours after your surgery or procedure or while you are taking pain pills

The medications you received may cause you to be dizzy, confused, sleepy, and clumsy. Because of this, it is important that you do not engage in any activity that requires you to be alert or coordinated for 24 hours after your surgery or procedure. Refer to page 6 for examples.

## PAIN MEDICATION TIPS

- If your pain medications are ordered “as needed,” you should take them before the pain gets severe. It can take 30 minutes for the medication to begin to work.
- If you tend to be sleepy while taking pain medications, you can take less medicine as long as you are comfortable.
- Side effects of pain medications may be avoided or treated with these simple remedies:

**Constipation:** increase physical activity; eat fruits or drink fruit juice; take a stool softener.

**Nausea and/or vomiting:** sip carbonated beverages that have gone flat; avoid acidic drinks such as grape and orange juice; eat small frequent meals; eat salty foods; drink a mixture of equal parts of water, clear soda, and apple juice.

- To be safe, keep track of when you take your pain medication by writing down the time you take it. This will help you follow the dosing instructions and prevent errors.