Getting Ready for Orthopedic Spine Surgery

Read this handout to prepare for your orthopedic spine surgery.

Supplies
We encourage you to buy postop dressing supplies before surgery such as:

- Gauze
- Tape
- Large bandages

Transportation
Arrange for someone to drive you to and from surgery and drive you to post-op visits and get medicine refills.

Medicine
1 week before surgery, stop taking:

- Any NSAIDS/anti-inflammatories
- Supplements
- Herbal medicines

If you take Aspirin 81mg daily, talk to us at your pre-op visit or if your visit is less than 1 week before surgery.

If you take vitamins, you may keep taking Vitamin D (if not combined with another type of vitamin).

If you take blood thinners, please check with your care team to see when or if you should stop taking it.

Bowel Prep
If you were told to do a bowel prep, please follow those instructions given to you at your pre-op visit.

Vaccines
Do not schedule any vaccines 72 hours before or after surgery.

Diet
The day before surgery, **do not** consume non-clear liquids or dairy products such as:

- **Fruit juices**
  - Orange juice
  - Pineapple juice
  - Grapefruit juice
  - Prune juice
  - Tomato juice
- **Sweet drinks**
  - Lemonade
  - Drinks with honey or lemon added
- **Milk and cream**
  - Milk
  - Cream
  - Coffee creamer
  - Other dairy products
- **Plant-based milks**
  - Almond milk
  - Oat milk
  - Coconut milk
  - Other plant-based milks

Do not eat after midnight the night before surgery. You may drink clear liquids up to 2 hours before surgery. Clear liquids include:

- Water
- Tea (no milk or creamer)
- Black coffee (no milk or creamer)
- Apple juice
- Electrolyte drinks
  - Gatorade
  - Powerade
  - Propel
- Clear soda

Avoid alcohol after 8pm the night before surgery.

Other Products
After midnight, **avoid:**

- Gum
- Hard candy
- Mints
- Cough drops or lozenges
- Antacids like TUMs
- Chewing tobacco

Bathing
The night before surgery, wash with Hibiclens® from the chin down. **Avoid** washing the face and genital area. Remove all artificial nails and nail polish.

The morning of surgery, wash with Hibiclens® from the chin down, avoid the face and genital region. Do not apply make-up, lotion or deodorant.

Shaving
Do not shave near the surgical area the 2 days before surgery. The hair will be trimmed the day of surgery if needed.

What to Bring
Be sure to bring anything you may need such as:

- Inhalers
- CPAP
- Eyeglasses
- Hearing aids
- Dentures
- Prostheses
- Non-skid slippers or slip-on shoes
- Other special equipment that you will need

Leave **all valuable items** at home such as:

- Wedding rings
- Jewelry
- Large sums of money

When to Call
Please call if you have any questions before or after surgery.

If you did not have a spine clinic pre-op visit 1 week before surgery, call the Spine Clinic.

We will call you 1-2 business days before surgery with your arrival time. If your surgery is on Monday, expect a call on Friday. Call the Spine Clinic if you do not get a call by **3pm the business day before.**

Who to Call
If you have questions, please contact your provider through MyChart or call your provider listed in your After Visit Summary or After Hospital Care Plan. For a list of UW Health Clinics, visit http://www.uwhealth.org/.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 5/2026 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#7030.