

# Your Guide to Cardiac Surgery



## Welcome to Sharp HealthCare

It is our goal to provide the exceptional care you need. We know that preparing for surgery can be overwhelming. Our care team is here to help you throughout the process.

This booklet will guide you through the stages of surgery:

1. Getting ready
2. Day of surgery
3. Recovery

Remember that every patient is different. Your care team will tailor your recovery program to your specific needs.

Please read this booklet and bring it to all appointments related to your procedure. Write down any questions and discuss them with your surgery team. It is important for you and your loved ones to understand what to expect so everyone can fully participate in your recovery.

In good health,

Your Sharp HealthCare Cardiac Surgery Team

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Your name \_\_\_\_\_

Surgeon's name \_\_\_\_\_

Surgeon's office phone number \_\_\_\_\_

Date of surgery \_\_\_\_\_

Surgery location:

Sharp Chula Vista Medical Center

Sharp Grossmont Hospital

Sharp Memorial Hospital



## Planning for Surgery

### Scheduling Your Procedure

After you meet with your surgeon and agree to have surgery, the surgeon's office will schedule your surgery and provide necessary information.

### Insurance Authorization

Your surgeon's office will contact your insurance provider to secure authorization for your procedure. Please notify your surgery scheduler immediately if there are any changes in your insurance since your last visit. Our Patient Financial Services team will contact you about any deductible or copay.

**You will need to pay any deductible or copay on the day of surgery.**

### Pre-Anesthesia Evaluation Services

If your surgeon refers you to Pre-Anesthesia Evaluation Services (PAES), someone in that department will contact you for a phone appointment to review your medical history and current medications.

### Preoperative Visit

The preoperative visit may take 1 to 2 hours. We encourage you to bring a support person who will help with your care. The following are necessary before surgery:

- Blood work (you do not need to fast)
- EKG
- Chest X-ray
- Current medications list
- Meeting with the nurse practitioner or physician assistant to review:
  - What to expect before, during and after surgery
  - Medications to continue or stop taking
  - How to use an incentive spirometer (breathing exercises)
  - How to care for your incision
  - Pain management
  - Diet and nutrition after surgery
  - Other restrictions during your recovery
  - Plans for after the hospital, such as home health care, rehabilitation or a skilled nursing facility (as needed)

Visit [sharp.com/paes](http://sharp.com/paes) for more information.

### Advance Health Care Directive

An advance health care directive (advance directive) is a legal document that allows you to make your health care preferences known if you cannot make decisions for yourself. In your advance directive, you can name a health care agent — someone you trust to make health care decisions for you — and what your preferences are about treatments that may be used to sustain your life. Advance directives are optional and can be removed or changed at any time. If you have an advance directive, please bring a copy to the hospital before your next visit or hospital admission. You do not need an attorney to complete an advance directive. To learn more and download a form, visit [sharp.com/advancedirective](http://sharp.com/advancedirective).

## Steps to Take Before Surgery

### One Month Before Surgery

You will need help from family members or friends immediately after leaving the hospital. Pick one support person who can be part of your team to help you make decisions and coordinate your care before, during and after surgery.

If you do not have help at home, or if it is limited, you can make your recovery easier by planning ahead. Before surgery, place often-used items between waist and shoulder height to avoid having to bend down or stretch to reach them. Stock up on food and other items, as shopping may be difficult when you first get home. Note: You will be able to climb stairs after surgery.

Eat a healthy diet leading up to your surgery, as this helps you recover more quickly. With some cardiac conditions, exercise is not recommended and may make symptoms worse. Speak with your doctor about whether physical activity is safe for you.

Stop taking over-the-counter medications or supplements as directed by your doctor.

If you smoke, this is the time to stop. Inhaling smoke, including cigarettes, vaping and recreational drugs, can lead to worsening respiratory problems after surgery.

Do not shave or remove any body hair on your chest for at least 1 week before your surgery. Your doctors and nurses will remove body hair near the surgical site with an electric clipper.

### One Day Before Surgery

#### Eating and Drinking

Please do not eat solid foods after 11 p.m. the night before surgery. You may take medications as instructed by your doctor with sips of water.

Your doctor will tell you if you need 1 bottle of pre-surgery drink. This drink is not recommended for people with Type 1 diabetes.

#### Skin Preparation

You will need to take 2 chlorhexidine (CHG) showers — the first the night before surgery and the second the morning of surgery. This will help decrease the risk of infection.

## Day of Surgery

### Morning of Surgery

## Your Checklist



Drink the bottle of pre-surgery drink (if provided by your doctor). You must be completely finished 4 hours before your scheduled surgery check-in time.



Take medications as instructed with sips of water before leaving to come to the hospital, if prescribed by your doctor.



Shower using the remaining 2 ounces (half bottle) of chlorhexidine (CHG) scrub, following the directions provided with the bottle.



Leave all valuables at home.

### After Checking Into the Hospital

Once your team is ready, you will be brought to the pre-surgery area. Here, the nurses and anesthesia providers will check you in and make sure everything is set for surgery. You then will be taken to the operating room.

### Operating Room

You will receive general anesthesia. This will require placing a breathing tube and using a ventilator to help you breathe during the operation. The operation can take 4 to 6 hours depending on the type of surgery.

### Recovery

Once your surgery is done, you will be moved to the surgical intensive care unit (SICU). If your breathing tube was not removed in the operating room, it will be removed 4 to 6 hours after you arrive at the SICU.

Your surgeon will provide a clinical update to your designated support person.

Early postoperative recovery:

- It is important for our care team to manage your pain because it can interfere with and slow your recovery, including breathing, sleeping, appetite and activity level.
- Walk 3 times daily with assistance.
- Sit up in a chair 3 times per day with assistance (if unable to walk).
- Use the incentive spirometer 10 times every hour while awake. This decreases the risk of developing pneumonia.
- Eat a special diet based on your needs.

The surgical team will continue to update you and your loved ones on your progress and the goals of care each day, including the estimated date you'll leave the hospital. Your case manager and surgical team will continue to evaluate and discuss your potential needs after leaving the hospital with you and your loved ones.

### Leaving the Hospital

Your surgical team will carefully evaluate you before determining that you are stable to leave the hospital. Your care team will facilitate your plan whether you are:

- Going home from the hospital
- In need of outpatient physical therapy, occupational therapy or home health nursing
- Transferring to a nursing facility or acute inpatient rehabilitation for more care

You will be instructed on how to manage your care once you leave the hospital and will receive:

- Detailed instructions with information about your operation and medications needed at home
- All prescriptions for medications (via electronic RX)
- An appointment with your surgeon or provider for follow-up after you leave the hospital
- Cardiac rehabilitation follow-up

### Recovering at Home

Follow all instructions given to you by your care team and:

- Shower daily. Do not soak or sit in water for 1 month after surgery.
- Walk 2 to 3 times per day for 20 minutes, every day. Avoid heavy activity and inclines.
- Follow your special diet and avoid caffeine and alcohol for 4 weeks after surgery.

### Returning to Work

It is normal to go back to work 8 to 12 weeks after surgery. If your job includes manual labor or heavy lifting, please discuss with your surgeon at your follow-up appointment.

Call your surgeon if you have:

- A fever above 101° F
- Signs and symptoms of wound infection (new redness, swelling or drainage)
- Uncontrolled pain

**Call 911 if you develop new chest pain, palpitations or shortness of breath that does not go away with rest.**



### **Post-Surgery Diet**

Good nutrition after surgery is important for recovery. If you had no dietary restrictions before surgery, expect to have some dietary restrictions after surgery. You will be limited to no more than 2 liters of fluids per day. However, eating a heart-healthy, low-cholesterol diet that includes enough protein, calories, vitamins and minerals is necessary to support healing. Avoid table salt and processed and fast foods. You will be given a dietary plan based on your medical condition before leaving the hospital.

It is normal after surgery that certain foods may taste different and certain smells may make you nauseous. Over time, you will be able to increase the amount of food you can comfortably eat.

### **Exercise and Activities**

**Listen to your body.** Please follow exercise restrictions as instructed by your surgeon. Walking is encouraged after surgery and you may climb stairs. It is important to avoid strenuous activity until you have seen your surgeon at your follow-up appointment.

It can take up to 2 to 3 months to recover fully. You may feel more tired and need to take an afternoon nap for up to 8 weeks after surgery. Your body needs rest to heal. Set small goals for yourself and try to do a little more each day.

### **Wound Care**

Unless you are otherwise instructed by your surgical team, shower daily and let the soapy water wash over your incision. Avoid taking baths, soaking in hot tubs and swimming for 4 to 6 weeks after surgery — until all incisions are completely healed.

You will have a special dressing over your surgical incision. You will receive instructions for wound care before leaving the hospital. You will have sutures (stitches) from the removal of your drainage tubes. These will be removed at your follow-up appointment with the surgeon.

### **Concerns After Surgery**

Call your surgeon's office if you have any concerns about your recovery. If you think something is not right, call sooner than later. While it is easier to reach someone from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., a surgeon is always on call for any emergency needs.





