

preparation for back surgery

Thank you for choosing St. Vincent's Medical Center for your back surgery. Please review this checklist to be sure you have covered any questions or concerns you might encounter.

The SVMC Admitting Office will contact you a few days before surgery to obtain information concerning where you live, your insurance coverage, etc. A nurse from the Short Stay Center will contact you the day before your surgery telling you what time to come to the hospital for your scheduled surgery. She will also answer any questions you may have at that time.

Please call (203) 576-5187 if you have any questions about your preparation for surgery.

SAFETY ADVICE PRE- & POST-SURGERY

St. Vincent's Medical Center suggests this "homework" to maximize your recovery. Consult your physician if in doubt and at the early signs of pain to prevent more serious damage.

In-Home Safety Tips: To reduce the chance of falling inside or outside your home, use these following guidelines in making your home safe before surgery:

- **Footwear:** Wear footwear that fits well and has a nonskid sole, such as sneakers. Shoes that close with Velcro® and have a flat heel are recommended. Women should avoid wearing high-heeled shoes.
- **Lighting:** Light all walkways throughout the house, especially on stairs and along the area between the bedroom and bathrooms. Be sure walking areas are wide enough for you to get through with your walker.
- **Furniture:** Tie up loose lamp cords, electrical cords or extension cords so the bottom of the walker or crutch cannot get caught. Chairs and sofas should be of a height to permit easy sitting and standing. Clear clutter from walkways.

pre-op checklist

1. Questions: Discuss these and other concerns with your surgeon:

- The surgery and how is it performed
- Concerns you have about the procedure or aftercare

2. Appointments & Tests:

All patients who come to St. Vincent's Medical Center (SVMC) for elective surgery will have their pre-operative tests performed on an outpatient basis through SVMC's One Stop Testing Department, a private laboratory or your primary care physician's office.

Your orthopaedic surgeon / neurosurgeon may ask you to visit your medical or family doctor shortly before your scheduled surgery. Your physician will decide which tests are needed. Your medical doctor may also see you during your hospital stay. These are some of the tests and information you may need before surgery.

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- **Kitchen:** Arrange your kitchen work center for convenience. Keep all utensils, dishes, pots and pans in a reachable area - not too high or too low.
- **Stairs:** Make sure the railings on all stairs are secure. Remove clutter in all walkways and from the stairs.
- **Bathrooms:** Apply non-slip surfaces to the bathtub and shower floors. A railing may be installed in the shower area for assistance.
- **Floors:** Remove all throws or scatter rugs. Avoid highly polished floors, and have floors fixed that are uneven or in disrepair.
- **Winter Safety:** Clear snow/ice from all sidewalk and driveway surfaces.

Safe Tips for Getting In & Out of Bed: To get out of bed, bend your knees and roll to the side as one unit without twisting your body. As you drop your legs off the bed, push your body up with your arms while keeping your back straight until you are upright. To get into bed, sit as far back onto the bed as you can. Keep your trunk erect and use your arms to lower yourself onto your side as you bring both bent legs up. Roll onto your back as one unit without twisting.

Walking Safety Tips: Walking is excellent exercise. Walk daily, setting a comfortable pace and distance. Aim to walk more each day. Minimize walking on stairs and inclines. Remember to pace yourself with distance to reserve enough energy and stamina for the return trip.

Climbing Stairs Safely: Use the railing, tighten your stomach muscles as you step up, keep your back straight, and go up one stair at a time only. As you come down the stairs, lead with the weaker leg first.

Sitting & Standing: The sitting position is stressful to the back, so limit sitting. Check with your physician about when to begin sitting and for how long. When you have worked up to sitting for extended periods of time, change your sitting position as needed. Here are some helpful hints:

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- Pre-admission screening – bloodwork and other diagnostic testing depending on your medical history and age
 - Make an appointment with your Internist.
 - Physical exam
 - Medical clearance
 - Ask for a list of your medications (including vitamins, natural supplements and herbal medications) and review which ones to take the morning of surgery.
- ### 3. Get Ready for Surgery
- Discontinue medications containing aspirin, as well as anti-inflammatories such as: Motrin®, Advil®, Aleve®, etc., two weeks prior to your day of surgery.
 - Review the medication checklist you went over with your surgeon about which medications you **SHOULD NOT TAKE** before surgery and which ones **CAN BE** taken early in the morning with a

- Interrupt periods of sitting with standing and walking. Try to limit sitting to 20-30 minutes at a time.
- Bend your knees to sit, keeping your back straight and eyes straight ahead. Place your hands on the armrests to help lower yourself into the seat. Try not to bend forward from your waist when sitting or rising from your chair.
- To stand, move to the front of the chair, with your back straight and your eyes ahead. Straighten your knees and move your hands on the armrests to rise.
- Maintain good posture when sitting, sit in a chair with your back straight, thighs supported and parallel to the ground. Please avoid slouching and soft chairs or couches.
- Keep reading material at eye level. Use a book holder angled toward your eyes, or hold your reading material above the desk.
- When putting on socks or stockings, sit straight and put one foot on the opposite knee.

ADDITIONAL POST-SURGERY HEALTH & SAFETY TIPS

- Avoid twisting. To turn, move your feet so that your entire body turns as a whole, being careful not to bend at your waist.
- Avoid reaching overhead (above shoulder level) as this tends to arch your back.
- Do not lift heavy objects. If you must lift, plan how to move/lift objects before you do it.
- Move your feet apart, keep your back straight, tighten your stomach muscles, keep your eyes level (looking ahead), and bend your knees. Place the object as close to your trunk as possible. Straighten your knees to stand while you maintain a straight back, eyes looking directly ahead.
- Avoid bending from the waist with your knees locked. Try to avoid lifting until your physician says it is ok.
- Push, do not pull.
- Avoid opening windows, mowing lawns, moving furniture,

pre-op checklist cont.

sip of water. (DO NOT bring your medications to the hospital the day of surgery.)

- Do not eat or drink anything after midnight the night before surgery.

4. Day of Surgery Instructions

- On the morning of your surgery, do not wear any makeup, mascara or nail polish.
- No jewelry should be worn to the hospital except for a wedding band, if desired.
- No dentures, hearing aids, glasses, contact lenses or other prosthesis are allowed in the operating room. (You may wear them to the hospital, but have a family member hold them once you enter the operating room.) Contact lens wearers should wear glasses.
- Take an over-the-counter laxative if you haven't moved your bowels the day before surgery.

carrying groceries, picking up children, vacuuming or driving until cleared by your physician.

- Divide strenuous jobs into smaller tasks spaced apart to allow for rests or alternate activities.
- When you brush your teeth or shave at the sink, bend your knees and hips, and keep your back straight. Brace yourself by placing one hand on the sink or use a step stool.

THANKS FOR USING THE ORTHOPAEDIC CENTER AT ST. VINCENT'S TO GET YOUR LIFE BACK IN MOTION.

The Orthopaedic Center at St. Vincent's offers a full range of services to help relieve pain and musculoskeletal and nervous system conditions, diseases, or related injuries and assist you in returning to an active lifestyle. You can rely on St. Vincent's team of highly skilled orthopaedic specialists and neurosurgeons to provide expert diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT
THE ORTHOPAEDIC COORDINATOR AT (475) 210-5409

St. Vincent's Medical Center complies with applicable Federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex. If you speak English, language assistance services, free of charge, are available to you. Call 1-475-210-5608.

St. Vincent's Medical Center cumple con las leyes federales de derechos civiles aplicables y no discrimina por motivos de raza, color, nacionalidad, edad, discapacidad o sexo. si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al 1-475-210-5608.

pre-op checklist cont.

5. Bring the items listed below to the hospital. DO NOT BRING valuables, jewelry, laptops/tablets, large sums of money or credit cards.

- List of medication and their dosages you currently take
- Test results and/or X-rays your MD may have requested you bring
- A copy of your Living Will or Health Care Proxy
- Short, lightweight bathrobe (For walking in the hall)
- Personal toiletries
- Eyeglasses (do not bring contact lenses)
- Dentures and hearing Aid
- Watch or clock
- Flat non-skid shoes/slippers
- Telephone numbers of people you may want to call
- Money for newspapers, magazines or items from gift cart. TV and wifi are provided at no cost.
- A book or hobby