

Wellness Quick Guide

Getting Ready for Surgery



**Grounded in clinical knowledge,
tailored for real people.**

This resource was reviewed by Zachary Hermes, MD, MBA, MPH, JM, Medical Director of Cardiovascular-Kidney-Metabolic Care. His feedback helped ensure this content is both accurate and empowering for real-life use.

Why This Guide Matters

Surgery isn't just about the operating room — it's about the whole journey before and after your procedure. Everyone deserves care that is clear, respectful and centered on you as a person.

For some people, particularly in underserved communities, surgical care can feel rushed, confusing, or even unsafe. This guide can help you take charge of your journey so you feel ready, supported and able to heal well.

Disclaimer: Your health is unique, and the information in this guide is for educational purposes only and is not a substitute for personal medical advice. Consult with a healthcare provider or registered dietitian to create a plan that is right for your specific health needs and goals.



1. Preparing for Surgery



You Good?

Feeling nervous or unsure about surgery is normal. The more you understand, the more confident and prepared you'll feel.

Real Talk



When your healthcare provider suggests surgery, you have a right to understand the game plan upfront. If something doesn't make sense, ask again. That's not being difficult — it's protecting your health.



Try This:

It's important to know what's ahead – including the risks, benefits and whether you have other choices. One simple way to get clarity is to ask: "What are the best, worst, and most likely outcomes for me?" Bring the list of questions below, then write down the answers and what they mean for your life.

Questions to Bring to Your Appointment

- What are the best, worst, and most likely outcomes for me?
- How long will I need to recover — including time off work and help at home?
- What happens if I don't have this surgery?
- Are there any other options besides surgery?
- What support or special supplies (like a walker, shower chair, etc.) will I need after surgery?

Take it a step further: Bring someone with you for another set of ears and added support. If your doctor doesn't give you clear and respectful answers, that's a warning sign about their care — not you.

2. Planning for Down Time



You Good?

Recovery takes time. Planning ahead keeps stress low and lets you focus on healing.

Real Talk



Many people wait until the last minute to deal with paperwork – like time-off requests, planning childcare, or insurance questions. The earlier you prepare, the smoother things can go.



Try This:

Use this checklist to organize your time-off plan and reduce stress in the days leading up to your procedure.

Questions to Bring to Your Appointment



Talk to your employer: Ask about medical leave options, short-term disability, or sick time. Give at least 2 weeks' notice if possible.



Request forms early: Ask your care team: "Can your office help complete my leave or disability paperwork?"



Designate a caregiver: If someone is helping you post surgery, ask if they need time off, too. Some workplaces offer family caregiving leave.



Check your insurance: Confirm what's covered (surgery, rehab, devices). You can also ask about pre-approvals or out-of-pocket costs.



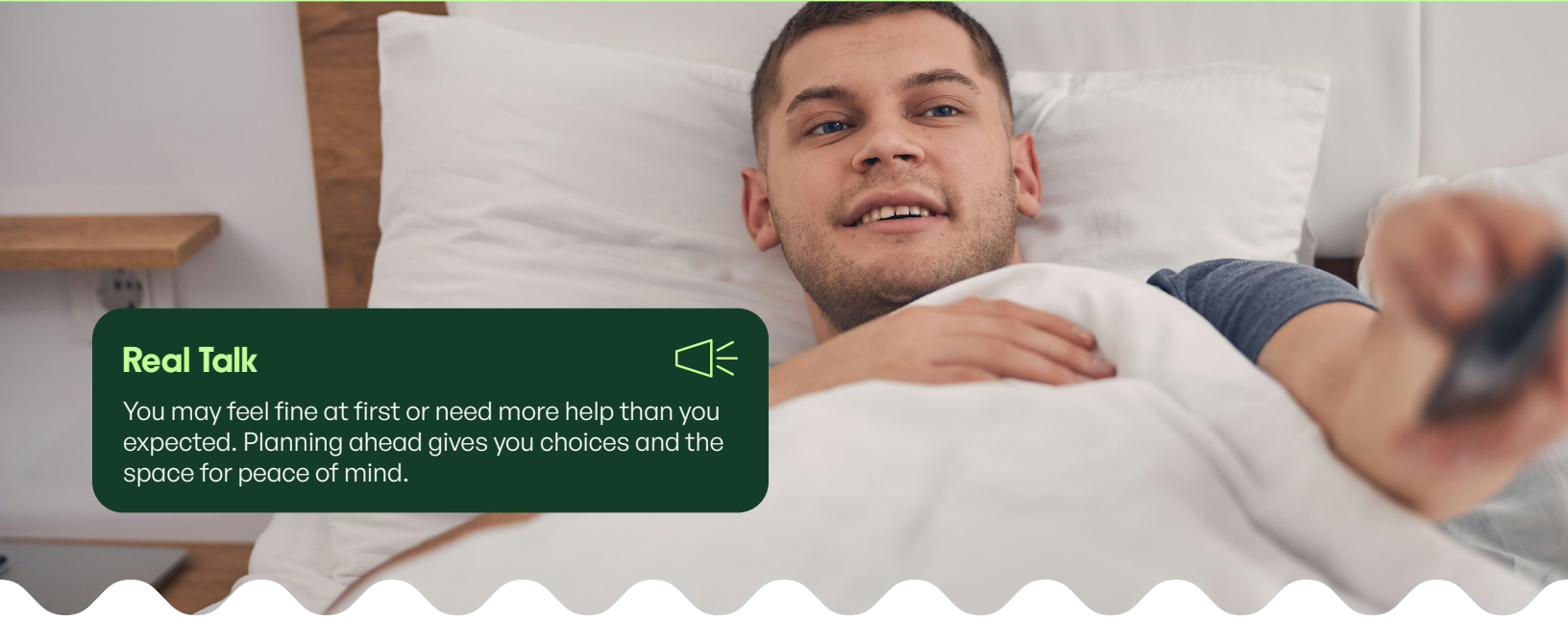
Stay organized: Keep a folder with surgery instructions, forms, prescriptions, and follow-up info.

3. Planning for Post-Op Support & Recovery



You Good?

Healing doesn't just "happen." The right support system makes recovery safer and less stressful.



Real Talk



You may feel fine at first or need more help than you expected. Planning ahead gives you choices and the space for peace of mind.

Try This:

Line up rides, meal support, or help with childcare now.



Ask your doctor if you'll need physical therapy, special tools (like crutches), or home nursing support.



Stock up on easy meals, bandages, or meds.



Set up a comfortable recovery space at home (close to the bathroom, no stairs if possible).



4. Healing Well, Living Well



You Good?

Surgery is a big step, but recovery is where real healing happens.

Real Talk



Skipping follow-ups or therapy slows your healing and raises risks.



Try This:

Call your care team right away if you have high fever, severe pain, or changes in your wound. Be sure to confirm follow-ups before leaving the hospital, and use this recovery follow-up checklist to stay on track with next steps.

Tip: If you run into challenges getting to appointments, ask about telehealth, community rehab programs, or sliding scale services. Your provider may be able to help.

Questions to Bring to Your Appointment

- When is my first follow-up appointment — and is it scheduled?
- Will I need physical therapy? If so, where and how often?
- Who should I call if I have questions during recovery?
- What warning signs should I watch for in the first week?
- How can I get help with challenges like rides, cost, or childcare?

Real-Life Results

Delaying care or downplaying symptoms doesn't protect you, it increases risk. When surgery is done at the right time, with the right plan, and the right support, it can:

- + Stay active, independent and prevent long-term disability
- + Lower your chances of ongoing pain
- + Boost your energy and quality of life

You deserve clear answers, real support, and full respect — before, during, and after surgery. Healing isn't just physical; it's about dignity and care at every step.