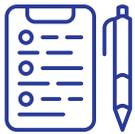


Perioperative Brain Health Initiative

American Society of Anesthesiologists®

Keeping Your Brain Healthy When You Have Surgery What You Need to Know

Surgery can be stressful as we get older. Being ready can relieve some of the stress. Some people get confused right after surgery (you may hear doctors calling this delirium and it may be helpful to use that term when speaking with hospital staff and health providers so they understand what you mean). Some people may feel “foggy” or not clear-headed for a few months afterwards too. The chance that this may happen to you rises after age 40 or if you have noticed some problems with thinking or you have had confusion or foggiess after surgery before.



It is a good idea to have a plan for friends and family to help with your money, or major decisions for a few weeks after surgery.

Take needed items with you, like hearing aids, teeth and glasses and ask to have them back as soon as possible after the surgery (in the recovery room ideally).



Keep taking your medicines unless your surgical team tells you to stop, do not add new medicines without talking to your doctor. Maybe ask your regular doctor to look over your drugs to make sure none will cause a problem with the surgery.



Try to stay as active as you can and try to get as healthy as possible before your surgery. Things you can do include eating well, talking to your doctor about help to stop smoking, exercise more if you can, and reduce alcohol.



Take photos or music with you – or ask your family and care team to bring these things to help you feel like yourself more quickly.



Tell your family and friends about your surgery and ask them to visit you. Conversations with friends and family can help sharpen

your mental focus and keep you aware of the correct day and time. Before surgery, it's also a good idea to talk with staff and providers about delirium. Include family and friends in a plan to monitor for signs of confusion or delirium after surgery and after you leave the hospital (often referred to as “hospital discharge”).



Get lots of rest before surgery. Bring an eye mask and ear plugs to the hospital to

help with sleep. Keeping blinds in the room open during daytime and closed at night can help you sleep. After surgery, try to return to a normal sleep cycle or routine.



You are at greater risk if you have problems with your thinking or you noticed problems after surgery in the past. Tell your doctor if this is true for you.



If/when you're able, getting up and safely walking after surgery helps with brain health.

Ask your doctors if physical therapy could help you.

Use a packing list and include:

- Health insurance cards
- Lists of current health conditions, drugs you are taking, and allergies
- Names and phone numbers of your healthcare providers
- Copies of healthcare advance directives (papers that spell out your wishes for care)
- A notebook and pen to write down notes on the advice your care team gives to you
- “Personal information sheet” with the name you like to be called and the language you are most at ease speaking, phone numbers for key family members and friends, and your current living situation