



To patients, families and caregivers:

The American College of Surgeons knows that preparing for surgery can be overwhelming. We created this Patient Checklist to help you prepare for your operation and recovery. The checklist includes questions to ask and information to prepare and share with your surgical team. It helps you keep track of your questions so you can be sure to get them answered prior to surgery. This checklist can also help make sure that your care team understands your goals.

Patient Checklist Inside

The American College of Surgeons created the Geriatric Surgery Verification Program to provide hospitals with a guide to deliver the best surgical care for older adults. The program sets high standards of care that guide the entire team's work with a patient and their family. The ACS verifies that hospitals have met these high standards and awards Surgical Quality Partner status to those hospitals.

facs.org/gsvpatient

ACS AMERICAN COLLEGE
OF SURGEONS

Geriatric Surgery Patient Checklist

Patient Name: _____

Type of Surgery: _____

Surgeon Name: _____

Prepare BEFORE your first appointment with your surgeon and care team:

1. What matters most to you? What do you hope to gain from this surgery? How will this operation affect your activities (e.g., walking, gardening) and your lifestyle (e.g., travel, self-care)?

2. Have you chosen the person to make healthcare decisions for you in case you are not able to do so (a medical proxy)?

Yes, the person is: (name and phone number) _____

3. Do you have advance directives? An advance directive is a document that lets you have a say about how you want to be cared for if you cannot speak for yourself.

Yes, I will bring a copy for my surgeon.

No, I do not have one. (If no, consider preparing one. Go to [facs.org/gsvpatient](https://www.facs.org/gsvpatient) for more information.)

3. If I am too sick or unable to speak for myself, how can I make sure you know my wishes?

4. Do you have someone ready to help you with care when you are home?

Name and phone number: _____ Relationship: _____

I do not have anyone yet.

5. Do you have a primary care provider (PCP) and do you want us to send a summary of your surgery?

Yes (name and phone number of PCP): _____

No

6. Are you taking any medications? This includes prescriptions, vitamins, supplements, weight loss medication, over-the-counter medications, nicotine (smoke, vape, patch, chew), marijuana or cannabis products, and alcohol.

If yes, provide a list or complete the table below. Your surgical team will review what may have to be adjusted before surgery. To find out more, go to Medications and Surgery at facs.org/gsvpatient.

Name of medication or supplement	What is it for?	When and how often do you take it?	Dosage	Concerns

7. List any allergies and reactions to medications below:

I have no allergies.

List any allergies and your reaction:

Questions to ask your surgeon/care team DURING your appointment before surgery:

1. What surgery am I having? Why do I need this operation?

2. What happens if I do not have the operation? Are there other treatment choices and what is the best option for me?

3. What are the risks and possible problems of having the operation? How does my health and lifestyle change my risks? Your surgeon will discuss your risks based on your health.

4. What should I expect if everything goes well? Will surgery improve my quality of life? In what ways?

5. How do I prepare for my operation? What are the tests or medication changes? Are there things I should be doing before hand to help me have the best recovery, such as nutrition drinks, exercise, set up for additional help? How long will I be in the hospital?

6. **What can I expect during recovery? When can I go back to doing [insert valued hobby/activity]? Can you tell me about my wound care, lifting, and activity changes? How will I become active again or at least be up and moving after surgery?**

7. **How will my pain be managed after surgery? Are there any ways to manage my pain without opioids?**
To learn more, go to facs.org/gsvpatient.

8. **Are there any special screenings or issues to review before surgery? If there are issues, can you tell me how they may affect my recovery from surgery?**

- Cognition (thinking)_____
- Delirium (confusion) risk_____
- Functional status (daily activities)_____
- Mobility (walking or moving)_____
- Nutrition_____
- Swallowing_____
- Need for palliative care assessment_____

9. **(If applicable) I wear glasses, hearing aids, dentures, or other personal assistive devices. How will these items be stored and when will I get them back after surgery?**

10. How do you identify and prevent confusion after surgery?

11. Do you anticipate any need for the following after my surgery? Check all that apply.

- Home Health Rehabilitation Services Skilled Nursing

NOTE: A skilled nursing facility provides specialized care, such as physical, occupational, or speech therapies. The goal is to get you well enough to go home. Rehabilitation services can include areas like physical therapy or occupational therapy. Ask about the quality of care for home health, nursing homes, and rehab services in your area. You can check this at: [medicare.gov/care-compare](https://www.medicare.gov/care-compare)

If yes, how will my transition of care be managed and will I receive a plan?

12. Is your hospital involved in any age-friendly initiatives, such as the American College of Surgeons (ACS) Geriatric Surgery Verification (GSV) Program?

- Yes No

Tips for communicating with your surgeon and/or care team

It is important to communicate your feelings, questions, and concerns with your healthcare provider before having surgery. The following suggestions may help improve communication between you and your healthcare provider:

- If you do not understand your healthcare provider's responses, ask questions until you do.
- Take notes and/or ask a family member, friend, or caregiver to accompany you and take notes for you.
- Ensure you receive a copy of your instructions in writing from your healthcare provider.
- Ask your healthcare provider where you can find more information about your condition. Some providers have printed resources in their offices or digital materials available through patient portals.
- If you still have questions, ask your healthcare provider where you can go for more information.