

Getting ready for my operation



This health fact sheet explains how you should prepare before the day of the operation and what to expect when you arrive at the hospital.

Where and when will I have my operation?

The CHUM will phone you to tell you the date of your operation. Then, on the day before the operation, someone will call you between 3:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. to tell you what time you should come to the hospital and where to go. Be sure to write this information down so you won't forget.



APPOINTMENT

Date:

Time:

Location:

.....

Prepare your suitcase in advance. It's possible that you'll be informed of the operation date just the day before.

What should I do if I can't come for my operation?

Call the CHUM Reception Service as soon as possible:

☎ 514 890-8405

What do I need to do **BEFORE** my operation?

You'll be told what to do with the medications you're taking. Follow those instructions carefully.

48 hours before the operation, stop taking any anti-inflammatory medications, such as Advil and Naproxen.



Certain other medications or natural health products should not be taken before an operation. If you're not sure, discuss this with your doctor or your nurse.

The week before your operation

Don't shave or wax the part of your body where the operation will be performed. This increases the risk of infection. It may also prevent the wound from healing properly. If shaving is needed, the care team will do it.



24 hours before your operation

- Don't consume any alcohol.
- Don't take drugs.
- Don't smoke.

This will reduce the risk of serious complications after your operation. In fact, it's best to stop smoking at least one month before the operation. To help you with this, your doctor or a nurse can prescribe nicotine patches or other medications. Don't hesitate to discuss this with them. Read also the health fact sheet [Quitting smoking before my operation](#).

The evening before or morning of your operation

Take a bath or shower and wash your hair. This can help prevent infections.

- Don't apply any perfume, cream, or lotion to your skin.
- Remove any false nails and nail polish from your fingers and toes.

Starting at midnight, the night before your operation

- Stop eating.
- Unless otherwise advised by your care team, you can drink up to one hour before your appointment. See page 4 for the quantities and liquids allowed.
- You may take any medications your doctor has authorized.

If you're having esophageal surgery, or if you have a stomach that empties too slowly (gastroparesis), you must not eat or drink after midnight.

What you should bring to the hospital

- ☐ Health insurance card
- ☐ Documents related to any personal insurance
- ☐ Forms that the doctor needs to complete (insurance, sick leave, medical certificate)
- ☐ A list of your current medications (which you can get from your pharmacist)
- ☐ Your medications in their containers so that they can be identified
- ☐ Personal hygiene products and accessories in travel size (soap, shampoo, deodorant, hair brush or comb, toothpaste, toothbrush, dental floss, shaving kit)
- ☐ Facial tissues
- ☐ Sanitary napkins (if needed)
- ☐ Comfortable slippers or shoes with non-skid soles
- ☐ Comfortable clothes and undergarments to wear when leaving the hospital
- ☐ Eyeglasses, dentures, hearing aids and their cases
- ☐ An empty reusable bag
- ☐ Cane, crutches, or walker



Bring only the essentials

Your personal items must fit into a bag or small suitcase the size of airline carry-on luggage and weigh no more than 10 kg (22 lbs).

Leave jewellery, money, credit cards, and other valuable items at home. The hospital is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

The person accompanying you will be responsible for your belongings and will watch over them during your operation. If you're alone, you'll be told where you can leave your things.



What should I expect when I get to the hospital?

Most often, you'll come on the morning of the operation. However, some patients need to come the evening before. The care team will welcome you. The usual steps are described below, but some might vary, depending on your case.

1 Respond to questions from the nurse

The nurse will ask about your health status. If you have a cough or fever, allergies, or any other health problem, tell the nurse.

Take this opportunity to talk about your concerns and ask any questions.

2 Undergo some medical exams

You may undergo some medical exams, such as:

- blood tests
- urinalysis
- x-rays
- echocardiogram (to measure heart activity)

For women 50 years of age and younger, a pregnancy test is also done.

3 Undergo an enema (to clear the intestines)

If you require an enema, the nurse will tell you what to do.

4 Have an intravenous solution or serum inserted

A small tube may be inserted into one of your veins (intravenous infusion) to give you a solution or serum. This liquid gives your body the water you won't be able to drink by mouth. If needed, this method can also be used to give you medications.

5 Sign a consent form

If this hasn't already been done, you'll be asked to sign a form to authorize the surgeon to operate and the anaesthetist to either "put you to sleep" or "freeze" part of your body.

Before signing the form, be sure you have a good understanding of your operation and the possible complications. Don't hesitate to ask questions.

6 Receive information on any exercises and special care to be taken after the operation

The nurse will explain how to:

- do the deep breathing and coughing exercises
- get up for the first time after the operation
- do the physical exercises
- manage your pain



What can I do if I'm worried?

It's normal to feel stressed or anxious before an operation. Here are some tips to help calm yourself:

- take deep breaths
- lie down with the lights out
- listen to music that you enjoy
- watch a television program or read
- talk about your worries, sometimes that can help
- visualize something that you enjoy
- think positive thoughts ("everything will turn out fine")
- ask to meet with a spiritual care advisor

If your worries keep you from sleeping, tell a member of your care team. It may be possible to prescribe a sleep medication for you.



USEFUL RESOURCES

Other health sheets published by the CHUM are available. Ask for those that might fit your situation.



You can also find them on our website
chumontreal.qc.ca/fiches-sante



Questions

Liquids allowed and drinking juice

- Unless otherwise advised, you can drink liquids safely **up to 1 hour before coming to the hospital**.
- Unless otherwise advised, 1 hour before coming to the hospital **you should drink** 500 millilitres of fruit juice **without pulp**. This will help your recovery and avoid complications after the operation.



Liquids allowed

- Water
- Tea or coffee
- Sports drinks (e.g., Gatorade, Powerade)
- Fruit juice without pulp, 1 hour before coming to the hospital (e.g., apple, cranberry, grape, or pulp free orange juice).



500 ml



Liquids not allowed

- Alcoholic beverages
- Coffee with milk
- Fruit juice **with pulp**
- Milk products
- Energy drinks (e.g., Red Bull, Monster)
- Plant-based drinks (e.g., almond or soy milk)



The content of this document in no way replaces the recommendations and diagnoses made, or the treatment suggested by your health professional.

To find out more about the Centre hospitalier de l'Université de Montréal
chumontreal.qc.ca