**Preoperative Instructions**

**How do I get ready for surgery?**

* It’s important to be in the best state of health you can be before your scheduled surgery. If you don’t regularly exercise, consider stretching or yoga. Both practices improve your core, arm and leg strength so you can get around a little easier once you’re in recovery or back home.  There are many free videos that you can find on the Internet to guide you through gentle stretching and yoga.  Getting enough rest and eating well before surgery will also help you cope once the surgery is complete.

* Prepare an advanced directive for your healthcare.  This can be done without the help of an attorney and is designed to communicate your wishes if you should become very sick to your family, friends and healthcare providers.  Give a copy to your family and bring a copy to the hospital.  We do not anticipate life-threatening complications from surgery, but it is wise to have this prepared so that your wishes are clear.  The following website is a useful resource for how to prepare an advanced directive: https://www.nhpco.org/patients-and-caregivers/advance-care-planning/advance-directives/preparing-your-advance-directives/

* Preparing and freezing or refrigerating healthy meals and snacks prior to surgery will make it easy to eat well after surgery.  Healthy food will give your body the fuel it needs to heal quickly so that you can get back to your normal self as soon as possible.
* Organize and clean your home as much as possible prior to surgery.  Coming home to a clean and organized space will decrease the stress that you experience during your recovery.

* There are some useful products you should buy ahead of time:
  + After reconstructive surgery most women will have vaginal discharge or bleeding.  Please buy some sanitary pads to have in the house to use after surgery. Do not use tampons.
  + Following surgery, you will have prescription pain medicine to use, but your surgeon will also recommend that you use over-the-counter pain medicine including ibuprofen and Tylenol.  As long as you are able to take these medications safely, please purchase these to have them in the house so you can use them after surgery.
  + Ice packs are useful to have on hand to help control pain after surgery.  A bag of frozen peas works well for this and it can be reused.

* If you become sick before surgery, (cold, flu, bronchitis or any other kind of infection) please notify your surgeon as soon as possible because it might be safer for you to delay your surgery until you are healthy again.

* A representative from the hospital where you are having your surgery will call you 1-2 days prior to your procedure to review your health history. Please have a list of your medical conditions, prior surgeries, allergies, current medications and any other health related information available to you can refer to it during this conversation. The hospital representative will give you directions about which of your medications you should take on the morning of surgery.

* **Do not eat or drink anything** (Including water, gum, hard candy, cough drops) after midnight the evening prior to your surgery.  The only exception to this would be if the hospital representative asks you to take some of your medications on the morning of surgery. It is safe to take medications on the morning of surgery with a sip of water.

It is important that you let your surgeon know if you are taking any prescription blood thinners which may need to be stopped or modified prior to your procedure. If you are on a prescription blood thinner (Coumadin, Xarelto, Pradaxa, Eliquis, Plavix or similar) the physician who   prescribes this medication to you will need to make a plan with you for stopping the medication prior to surgery and/or bridging your medication with a different medicine prior to surgery.

* Do not take any over-the-counter blood thinning medications for **SEVEN** days prior to your surgery (unless directed by your physician). These include the following:
  + Aspirin
  + Supplements or herbs of any kind
  + Anti-inflammatories (Advil, Aleve, Motrin, etc.)

* If you are unsure if a medication you are taking is a blood thinner, please contact your pharmacy to clarify.
* If you are having pain prior to surgery, it is safe to take Tylenol as this does not thin your blood.

* If you need to stay overnight in the hospital, pack a bag for the hospital with a bathrobe, non-slip slippers, pajamas and your toiletries, including soap, shampoo, comb/brush, feminine pads, body lotion, facial tissue, lip balm, and even “baby wipes” for convenient hand washing when you are in bed. Please do not bring valuables to the Hospital. Remove all jewelry, body-piercings, make-up and nail polish before your visit.

**Bowel Care Prior To Surgery**

A formal bowel prep (like you would do prior to colonoscopy) is **not** necessary prior to your surgery. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the office.

**On the of Day of Surgery**

* Please shower or bathe the morning of your procedure. Do not wear any makeup or perfumed deodorants.  Please do not shave your pubic hair in anticipation of surgery.  If this is necessary, this will be done as a part of your surgery in the operating room.
* Wear comfortable, loose fitting clothes.
* Do not wear jewelry.
* Do not bring any valuable items with you to the hospital.

* The hospital representative that calls you several days prior to surgery will give you directions on what time to arrive and where to go.

* All patients should have a family member or friend with them in the preop area if possible. **You must have a responsible adult over the age of 18 to drive you home from the hospital.  We also recommend that someone stay with you for 24-48 hours following surgery to help care for you.**

* Hospital regulations require that females of childbearing age who have not had a hysterectomy give a urine sample for a pregnancy test. Your procedure may be delayed or canceled if you refuse to give a sample.

* Once you are admitted into the preoperative area, you will change into a gown, have an IV placed and your blood drawn.  During this time, you will also meet with a preoperative nurse, your anesthesiologist and the staff of the operating room where you will have your surgery.  You will be asked many questions and some of them will be repetitive!  Please remember that this is for your safety and helps ensure that you receive the very best health care possible.  You will also have an opportunity to have any last-minute questions and concerns addressed.

* After the surgery, you will spend approximately two hours in the Post Anesthetic Care Unit (PACU). The surgeon will contact your family either in person or by phone to communicate with them about how the surgery went.