

## Patient Information

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# CONSIDERATIONS BEFORE SURGERY

## Preparing for surgery

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Once you have decided to undergo surgery, it is important that you prepare yourself both mentally and physically for the procedure.

The following information is intended to answer some common questions that may apply to all patients.

Specific considerations for you as an individual may require different preparation or expectations – if you require further clarification please seek this from Dr Mandziak or his secretary before your operation.

## Realistic Expectations

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Patients are happiest after their surgery when they have clear understanding of their surgical recovery, and realistic expectations of their rehabilitation.

Orthopaedic surgery has excellent outcomes, though patients often report a full recovery taking up to 12 months following major operations. Every patient is different and it is quite common for two patients with exactly the same treatment to experience a very different recovery.

Please ask Dr Mandziak for an estimate on recovery time for your surgery given your individual situation.

## General Health

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If you have had any previous medical problems please make sure Dr Mandziak and your anaesthetist are aware. Even conditions that have been treated in the past may impact your planned surgery.

## Infections

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If you have an infection elsewhere in your body prior to your planned surgery, please let Dr Mandziak know.

All infections should be adequately treated before having elective surgery to reduce the risk of the infection spreading or worsening.

## Dental Health

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If you are planned for joint replacement, make sure any major dental work is performed first. Problems such as tooth abscesses or infections may spread through the blood and cause joint infection.

For similar reasons, if you have previously had a joint replacement and require major dental work, your dentist should arrange preventive antibiotics before the dental procedure. See the link below for Arthroplasty (Joint Replacement) Society of Australia guidelines:

<http://www.aoa.org.au/docs/default-source/subspecialties/arthrecommndental.pdf?sfvrsn=2>

## Nutrition

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Poor nutrition contributes to poor healing and may prolong your recovery. A balanced diet is all most people need to obtain adequate nutrition.

If your diet is restricted or lacking in major food groups you may require vitamins or supplements.

## Weight

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Being underweight (body mass index <20) can affect your body's response to the anaesthetic, wound healing and the stress of surgery.

Patients who are overweight or obese, particularly with a body mass index >40, have markedly higher complication rates after some operations.

Careful dieting to reduce your weight pre-operatively may reduce these risks. 'Crash' diets are undesirable.

Medical studies have shown that diet is much more important and successful than exercise when trying to lose weight.

## Smoking

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Smoking interferes with wound and bone healing, and contributes to a higher infection risk. Cutting down (preferably stopping altogether) will reduce your surgical risks and likely improve your recovery and outcome.

## Medical Tests

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Blood tests, urine tests, ECG heart tracing and x-rays may be requested in preparation for your operation depending on the type of procedure and your previous medical history.

## Fasting

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In general you should not eat or drink for 6 hours prior to an anaesthetic. You may drink water up until 4 hours prior to an anaesthetic. We may request that you fast slightly longer than 6 hours if there is a chance your surgery may happen earlier than scheduled.

Milk, coffee, chewing gum and lollies all count as food as they stimulate the production of stomach acid.

## Medications and Blood Thinners

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If you take regular medications please bring a list to all your appointments. Please also bring the medications with you to the hospital on the day of your surgery.

Some medications such as blood thinners need to be stopped before surgery. It is important that we are aware of all your medications to help advise you. Also alert us to any medication allergies.

## Nausea and Vomiting

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The combination of surgery, anaesthetic medications and pain-relievers may contribute to feelings of nausea. If you are prone to nausea after anaesthetics, discuss this with your anaesthetist pre-operatively.

After your surgery, try to avoid acidic drinks such as fruit juices that may contribute to nausea. Begin with light meals and avoid greasy food in the first 24 hours.

## Swelling

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Swelling is normal after surgery. Depending on the initial problem and the type of surgery, swelling is greatest for the first six weeks, and may persist for many months.

You may notice the swelling worsens during the day due to the effect of gravity and activity levels.

Elevation of the limb to chest height will help the swelling reduce.

## Pain Relief

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Some discomfort is expected after any surgery. It is often best to take gentle pain relief such as paracetamol regularly, with stronger medications only if required.

## Driving

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If you have an injury or surgery, your ability to drive safely may be affected.

If you have an anaesthetic you should not drive for at least 24 hours. Some operations require longer periods without driving. Check with your private insurer as they may have their own guidelines.

The Arthroplasty (Joint Replacement) Society of Australia recommends patients abstain from driving for 6 weeks after hip or knee replacement surgery. This is a safe guideline which I support.

## Work

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Some smaller procedures such as knee arthroscopy may only require 1-2 weeks off work if you have a desk job, or longer if undertaking strenuous work.

Major operations such as joint replacements may require at least 6 weeks off work.

Please ask Dr Mandziak or his staff for advice on your particular situation.

## Showering

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You may shower with the clear waterproof dressing intact. If the dressing comes off or water is getting into your incision please call us or arrange for a new dressing to be fitted. Avoid soaking your incisions in a bath, pool or spa for the first 6 weeks post-operatively (or 2 weeks after knee arthroscopy).



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APPOINTMENTS AND ENQUIRIES

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