

# SELF-CARE ESSENTIALS CHECKLIST

## UNDERSTANDING A RECOMMENDATION FOR SURGERY

Are you concerned about a recent doctor's recommendation to have surgery? If so, you're not alone. More than 15 million Americans have surgery each year. Most surgeries are not emergencies and are considered to be "elective." The good news is that with elective surgery, you have time to learn about it and ask questions to be sure it is the best treatment for you.

Take an active role in your health care by talking with your provider about any recommended surgery. Ask questions so that you know how the surgery will help. Learn the risks and benefits, and understand all of your options.

### ASK YOUR PHYSICIAN

- Why do I need surgery?
- What kind of surgery do I need?
- What will you be doing before, during and after surgery?
- What are the benefits and risks of having this surgery?
- Have you done this surgery before?
- How successful is this surgery?
- Which hospital is best for this surgery?
- Will the surgery hurt?
- Will I need anesthesia?
- How long will the surgery take?
- How long will it take me to recover?
- How long will I be in the hospital?
- What will happen after the surgery?
- What changes or activities should I plan to aid with my recovery?
- How much will the surgery cost?
- Will my health insurance cover the surgery?
- Is there some other way to treat my condition?
- What will happen if I wait or don't have this surgery?
- Where can I get a second opinion?

Source: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, [www.ahrq.gov](http://www.ahrq.gov)



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