

Pre-Surgery Checklist & Toolkit



A calm, practical guide to help you feel prepared

Keep Well Nutrition & Health — Coach Cedric Murray

This toolkit is not medical advice. Always follow your hospital's instructions first. This is here to help you feel organised, ask the right questions, and set yourself up for a smoother recovery.

Welcome

If you've got surgery coming up, it's normal to feel a bit on edge. Not just about the operation - but everything around it: appointments, medication instructions, what to pack, what to sort at home, and how you'll manage for the first few days after.

This toolkit helps you prepare in a way that's **clear and steady**, without panic.

The aim: reduce last-minute stress and make recovery easier.

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1. Your surgery snapshot (fill this in)

Keep this page with you and share it with a family member if needed.

- **Procedure:** _____
 - **Hospital / clinic:** _____
 - **Date:** _____ **Time:** _____
 - **Arrival time:** _____
 - **Ward / unit (if known):** _____
 - **Consultant / team:** _____
 - **Pre-op assessment date:** _____
 - **Transport plan:** Family/Friend Taxi Hospital transport
 - **Emergency contact:** _____
 - **Important numbers:** _____
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2. Foundation Checklist (7–14 days before)

Tick off what applies:

Health & admin

- Confirm surgery date/time and arrival instructions
- Read hospital instructions carefully (fasting, washing, medications)
- Arrange time off work / responsibilities
- Sort pet care / childcare if needed
- Check you have photo ID and any documents required
- If you have new symptoms (fever, chest infection, etc.) contact your team

Home set-up (you'll thank yourself later)

- Create a clear walkway (remove trip hazards, loose rugs)
 - Set up a “recovery station” (water, meds, charger, tissues, notebook)
 - Place everyday items at waist height (avoid bending/reaching)
 - Stock up on easy meals, snacks, and fluids
 - Wash comfy clothing and bedding
 - If you live alone, arrange check-ins for the first few days
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3. Medication & supplements (important)

This is where people get caught out. Don't guess — confirm.

- Make a list of all **medications, supplements, and herbal products**
- Ask: **What must I stop? What can I continue?**
- Ask: **When do I restart after surgery?**
- Note any allergies or past reactions (including anaesthetic issues)

My medication list (bring to hospital)

Item Dose When I take it Started Notes

4. Questions to ask your surgical / pre-op team

Use these to feel clearer (tick what you want to ask):

The procedure

- What exactly is being done, and why?
- What are the main risks for someone with my health profile?
- How long will I be in hospital?
- What pain control will be offered?
- What are the signs of complications I must watch for?

Recovery

- What activities should I avoid (lifting, driving, stairs, bending)?
- When can I shower/bathe safely?
- What's the expected recovery timeline (week 1, week 2–4, etc.)?
- When is my follow-up appointment?

Practical

- What should I bring on the day?
 - Do I need support at home? For how long?
 - Who do I contact if I'm worried after discharge?
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1. The night before + surgery morning

The night before

- Follow fasting instructions exactly (food and fluids)
- Charge phone + pack charger
- Set out loose clothing and footwear
- Shower/wash as instructed
- Set transport alarm/reminder
- Prepare your home recovery station

Surgery morning

- Take only approved meds (as instructed)
 - Bring your medication list + ID
 - Bring glasses/hearing aids (and cases)
 - Leave valuables at home if possible
 - Arrive on time (unhurried)
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2. Hospital bag packing list

Essentials

- ID / documents / appointment letters
- Medication list + any medications (as instructed)
- Phone + charger
- Glasses / hearing aids + cases
- Comfortable underwear + loose clothing
- Slip-on shoes or slippers with grip
- Toiletries (toothbrush, wipes, deodorant, lip balm)
- Tissues
- Small notebook + pen (for instructions)

Comfort extras (optional)

- Earplugs / eye mask
- Small snack for after (if allowed)
- Water bottle (if permitted)
- A light cardigan/hoodie (hospitals can be cool)

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3. Home recovery plan (first 72 hours)

This is where preparation pays off.

Support & safety

- Someone available to check in: _____
- Meals arranged: Ready meals Batch cooked Help from others
- Clear path to toilet/bed/chair (no obstacles)
- Night light for hallway/bathroom
- Keep phone within reach

Your recovery basics (Keep Well approach)

- **Rest** (but don't stay frozen in one position all day)
- **Hydration** (sip regularly)
- **Simple nutrition** (protein + fluids + fibre when tolerated)
- **Gentle movement** as instructed (short walks around the room/house if allowed)
- **Ask for help early** — don't wait until you're struggling

Recovery isn't about "pushing through." It's about steady steps.

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4. Daily recovery check-in (printable)

Day: _____ Date: _____

- Pain level (0–10): _____
 - Sleep: poor ok good
 - Appetite: low ok good
 - Fluids: low ok good
 - Bowel movement (if relevant): yes no
 - Movement (as allowed): none light steady
 - Wound / dressing notes: _____
 - Questions for nurse/GP: _____
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Daily recovery check-in (printable)

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- Pain level (0–10): _____
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5. Red flags (when to seek help)

Follow your hospital discharge instructions first. Seek urgent help if you have:

- severe or worsening pain not controlled by prescribed medication
- fever, chills, or signs of infection at the wound
- heavy bleeding or wound leakage
- sudden breathlessness, chest pain, fainting
- swelling/pain in the calf (especially one-sided)
- confusion or sudden deterioration

If you feel seriously unwell, don't wait — get help.

A calm closing

You don't need to be fearless. You just need to be prepared.

A few small actions before surgery can reduce stress and support recovery:

- a clear home set-up
- a simple plan
- the right questions
- the right support

Wishing you steady recovery - one step at a time.

Coach Cedric

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Disclaimer: This toolkit is for educational purposes and does not replace medical advice. Always follow your hospital or clinician instructions. If symptoms feel urgent or severe, seek medical help immediately.