A Guide to Your Pre-Admission Test and Same Day Surgery

General Information and Answers to Frequently Asked Questions to Help You Prepare for Your Surgical Procedure at Christ Hospital

Christ Hospital
176 Palisade Avenue, Jersey City, NJ 07306
Pre-Admission Testing Department: 201.795.8768
Hospital Main Number: 201.795.8200 • www.ChristHospital.org
Introduction
Thank you for choosing Christ Hospital as your hospital of choice. This booklet is designed to provide you with comprehensive information needed to ensure the best preparation for surgery with the desired outcomes.

A Pre-Admission Test (PAT) provides the medical staff of Christ Hospital with the appropriate information so that we can provide you with excellent care. This process also minimizes the likelihood of a disruption with your scheduled surgery.

Before Your Surgery
Please call the Pre-Admission Testing Department as soon as your surgeon schedules your surgery. The Registration Department will pre-register you prior to your PAT. We recommend scheduling your PAT at least three working days (Monday through Friday) before your surgery. Testing within this time frame assures that all results are completed in time for the surgery and, if determined, any abnormalities can be properly addressed. Completing a PAT less than three days prior to your procedure increases the risk of postponing the surgery if abnormal results are found.

Please note, scheduling a PAT on the day of surgery is not recommended. If your test results are not acceptable, the surgery will be cancelled.

The Pre-Admission Testing Department is open Monday through Friday, from 6:30 AM to 3:30 PM. To schedule your PAT, please call: 201.795.8768.

Preparing for Your Pre-Admission Test
On the day of your PAT, please bring all paperwork from your surgeon, insurance cards, claim forms, authorizations, and photo identification, such as a driver’s license.

You will need to bring a list of all medications you are taking, including any over-the-counter or herbal medications, to your PAT. You may also bring your medication bottles, if this is easier.

Other tests ordered by your doctor, that are unrelated to the planned surgery, will not be performed during the PAT visit and will not be scheduled through the Pre-Admission Testing Department. These tests can be completed on an outpatient basis on the same day as the PAT.

Even if testing is not required, the Pre-Admission Testing nurse will schedule an appointment with you to prepare you for your surgery. They can provide you with instructions, answer your questions, and complete a health assessment, which will help us better care for you at the time of your surgery.

During the PAT, the Pre-Admission Testing nurse will perform a nursing assessment, take your medical history, offer pre- and post-operative information and education required for your procedure, and perform any blood tests, electrocardiogram (EKG), chest X-ray, or other testing required by your surgeon or anesthesiologist.

The duration of the PAT can vary from 20 minutes to one hour, depending on the unique needs of the patient.

An anesthesiologist will review your record and may meet with you prior to your admission and/or surgery to assess your medical condition. The Pre-Admission Testing Department will coordinate these appointments with your PAT.

Preparing for Your Surgical Procedure
On the day before your procedure, you will receive a telephone call by 7:00 PM to tell you what time to arrive at the hospital. If you do not receive a call, please call the Admitting Department at 201.795.8260 for your arrival time.

Generally, you will be asked to arrive at the hospital approximately 1½ – 2 hours before surgery. Please arrive on time. Every effort is made to adhere to the surgical schedule. Your surgery may be delayed or may be moved up on the schedule. Arriving on time will help avoid unnecessary delays.

Patients should not eat or drink anything (including water) after midnight the day before surgery. However, patients who receive special instructions to take medications that morning should do so only with a sip of water.

On the morning of surgery, patients should not chew gum, eat candy, or consume mints. Please do not smoke or drink alcohol for one week prior to surgery. If you are interested in a Smoking Cessation program, please call 866.904.8281.
Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Why do I need pre-admission testing?

A: Although anesthesia is much safer than it was just a couple of decades ago, much of the safety is due to proper identification and treatment of pre-existing medical conditions. Patients who are healthy and are having very minor surgery may not require a PAT. Others may require sophisticated testing to evaluate heart or lung function. The goal of the PAT is to be sure that every patient is in as good shape as possible before surgery. Even if you do not require testing, the Pre-Admission Testing nurse will make an appointment with you to do an assessment.

Q: I saw my doctor a couple of months ago — are those results still good?

A: They may be. In general, blood tests are valid for 30 days, unless the results were abnormal or the patient has a condition that causes frequent changes in the results. EKGs are considered valid for six months, unless the patient has had more recent cardiac symptoms. Chest X-rays are considered valid for one year, unless the patient has had more recent respiratory symptoms. A history and physical is required within 7 days of the surgery, which your surgeon will provide.

Q: May I eat before my procedure?

A: Some patients may have to follow a special diet a day or two before surgery. These instructions, if applicable, will come from your surgeon. If you are having a local procedure without general anesthesia or sedation, you may have a light meal before you arrive, unless your doctor tells you otherwise. If you are having IV sedation or general anesthesia, you may not eat or drink anything after midnight—not even water. Chewing gum, eating candy, or consuming mints is not permitted. The Pre-Admission Testing nurse will explain this to you. Any exceptions should be discussed with your surgeon or Pre-Admission Testing nurse. These guidelines will also be reviewed with you during your call the day before surgery.

Q: I have had nausea and vomiting after anesthesia in the past. Can I avoid this in the future?

A: Nausea and vomiting are two of the most distressing side effects of general anesthesia and pain medications. It is not possible to prevent these symptoms in all patients, but your anesthesiologist can take many steps to help. First, if the procedure can be done without general anesthesia, this will reduce the likelihood of nausea and vomiting. If general anesthesia is required, the anesthesiologist can avoid certain medications and give anti-nausea medications to help avoid symptoms. If you have had severe symptoms after anesthesia in the past, alert your surgeon and the nurse who contacts you pre-operatively. Some of the best medications to prevent post-operative nausea and vomiting are most effective when taken before surgery.

Q: Why can’t I eat the day of surgery?

A: During anesthesia, your muscles relax and normal reflexes do not function. You are more likely than normal to have any stomach contents pass up to the mouth at a time when you will not be able to cough. If stomach contents enter the lung, you can develop serious respiratory complications. If your stomach is empty, this is much less likely to happen.

Q: Should I take my medication on the day of surgery?

A: Do not take aspirin, coumadin, heparin, or oral diabetes medication unless instructed to do so by the doctor who prescribed it or by your surgeon. Stopping these medications can be dangerous for some patients, so be sure to ask your regular doctor or surgeon what to do about them. In general, you should take other regular medication at the normal time, with a sip of water. It is most important to take your regular dose of your heart, blood pressure, seizure, and/or breathing medication.

Q: I take pain medication — do I need to stop it?

A: Narcotics, Ultram (tramodol), acetaminophen (Tylenol), and Celebrex can be taken up until the time of surgery. The non-steroidal anti-inflammatory (NSAID) medications can cause increased bleeding and should be stopped 24 hours before surgery. This class of medications includes ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) and naproxen (Aleve). Medications containing aspirin can also cause increased bleeding and should be stopped seven days before surgery.

Q: What do I need to do the day of surgery?

A: You will receive instructions from the hospital about when and where to arrive. Please be sure to bring your insurance information and any co-payment. Wear casual, comfortable clothes. If you will have a cast or splint after surgery, wear appropriate clothing. Leave all valuables at home, including jewelry, rings, cell phones, money, wallets, and watches. If you wear glasses, contact lenses, or hearing aids, bring a case to place them in while in surgery. You can brush your teeth, but do not eat or drink anything after midnight unless instructed otherwise. You should shower on the morning of their surgery to clean the surgical site. Do not use any creams, lotions, or powders on your skin the morning of surgery. Nail polish should be removed before surgery.
Q: Is it alright for someone to accompany me to the hospital?

A: Yes. We ask that only one person accompany you due to limited space in the waiting room. While you are in surgery, your family member or friend may wait for you in the Same Day Surgery Waiting Area. Other family members are welcome to wait in the lobby. When your operation is completed and you are taken to recovery, your visitors will be informed. Family members are not permitted to watch the surgery. Please provide us with a contact number should we need to notify someone of your progress.

Q: How much will it hurt after surgery? How will my pain be controlled?

A: Everyone's pain after surgery is different. Our goal is to keep you as comfortable as possible. Most patients require some pain medication after surgery, which is arranged by your surgeon. Pain medications can be given by mouth or intravenously. You will be monitored and treated for any pain in the recovery area after surgery. It is important to let the nurse know about your pain so you can be made as comfortable as possible.

Q: How long will I be in the hospital?

A: Your doctor will determine how long your hospital stay will be. Once your surgery is completed, your anesthesia has worn off, and discharge instructions have been given, you may leave. If you require one or more nights in the hospital, your surgeon, physician, or hospital staff will discuss that with you. Before you leave the hospital, the nursing staff will give you full instructions about dressings, medications, follow-up appointments, and answer all your questions.

Q: Will I be able to drive afterwards?

A: If you are having IV sedation or general anesthesia, you may not drive. Please arrange for a responsible person to pick you up and stay with you for a period of time. If you are having local anesthesia (no sedation), you may drive unless the surgery affects your ability to do so (eye, foot, or hand surgery).

Q: Is there anything else I need to know?

A: Please arrive two hours before your scheduled surgery, unless otherwise instructed the day before surgery. If you have had X-rays related to your surgery taken outside of Christ Hospital, be sure to bring them with you. If you have diabetes, bring your insulin; if you have asthma, bring your inhaler. In compliance with the Joint Commission on the Accreditation for Healthcare Organizations, you will be given a “Speak-Up” brochure. This brochure encourages your participation in your care. Pay attention to the care you are receiving; educate yourself about your diagnosis; know what medications you are taking and why.

Parking

The parking garage is located next to the Doctors’ Office Building, located at 142 Palisade Avenue. Your parking ticket can be validated at the front lobby desk.

Directions to the Same Day Surgery Unit

Enter the hospital using the main lobby entrance. Check in with the Security representative at the front desk. On your right, you will see a hallway with a blue line on the floor. Follow the blue line past the cafeteria to the elevator. Take the elevator to the first floor. Check in at the nurses’ station.

Discharge from Same Day Surgery

For the first 24 hours after surgery, you should remain within one hour’s traveling distance of the hospital. If possible, have someone stay with you during this time. During the first 24 hours after surgery, it is important if you have been given any form of sedation that you DO NOT drive a car, drink alcohol, or make any important decisions or sign any legal documents. We will call you the day after your surgery to see how you are doing and answer any of your concerns. You may also receive a satisfaction survey in the mail. Christ Hospital strives to provide excellent care for all of our patients, and we are always striving to meet our patient’s needs and expectations.

Billing and Registration

The statement you receive from Christ Hospital will specify the cost of the operating room, the Post Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU), and laboratory tests. You will also receive separate bills from your surgeon, the anesthesiologist, the radiologist, pathologist, and cardiologist, if applicable. Prior to your scheduled surgery, a financial counselor will call you for your insurance information and pre-registration.