

Count Down to Your Surgery Checklist

DURING THE MONTHS BEFORE SURGERY:

- Schedule your surgery with your surgeon's secretary or surgical scheduler. Please keep in mind that a parent or legal guardian must accompany all children (younger than 18 years) to the pre-surgical visit and on the day of surgery. A legal representative must accompany all patients who lack the capacity to make health care decisions or who are unable to articulate their wishes.
- [Make reservations for housing](#) as soon as you have a surgery date. Note that you might have to be in Baltimore several days before your surgery for your presurgical visit. You also might have to stay in the Baltimore area for a period of time after surgery while attending follow-up visits and while undergoing physical therapy at the International Center for Limb Lengthening (ICLL). Ask your surgeon how long you will need to stay in the Baltimore area.
- Schedule a preoperative examination with your primary care physician or pediatrician. The examination should be scheduled so that it occurs between 7 and 30 days before the surgery. Call our office and provide the surgeon's secretary with the name and phone number of the primary care physician or pediatrician and the date of the preoperative examination. If you have problems scheduling a preoperative exam in this time frame, contact your surgeon's secretary. Have your primary care physician or pediatrician fill out the [Preoperative History and Physical Examination Form](#) (Please fax this completed form ASAP to your ICLL doctor) and the [Preoperative Patient Questionnaire](#).
- If you have other medical conditions, you may need to schedule examinations with specialist(s) to obtain clearance to have surgery. For example, if you have heart problems, your cardiologist may need to complete paperwork. Find out now if you need special clearance to have surgery.
- Call your insurance company and complete the [Health Insurance Benefits Worksheet](#) so that you understand your benefits. If you have concerns about your benefits, please contact us.
- Physical therapy: Ask your doctor about physical therapy now so that you can plan appropriately. (How many times per week? How many weeks? Do I need to have physical therapy at the ICLL or can I find a local physical therapy facility?). If you will be doing physical therapy at the ICLL, schedule your post-surgery sessions now. Be sure to call your insurance company to find out your inpatient and outpatient physical therapy benefits (see the [Insurance Benefits Worksheet](#).) If you have any concerns, please contact us.
- Find a local physical therapy facility (only if you will not have physical therapy at the ICLL—please ask your surgeon).
- Find a facility where you can [donate blood \(if necessary\)](#).

- See your dentist for a routine dental hygiene visit before surgery (optional) because it will be more difficult to visit the dentist during treatment.
- Check local prescription laws to learn whether you will be able to fill a Maryland doctor's prescription in your home state.
- Determine whether you will be able to attend work and/or school while undergoing treatment.
- If your child is not used to showers or portable shower heads, you may want to introduce these before surgery.
- You may want to try to teach older children how to swallow pills. Some parents have told us that they had their kids practice using baked beans.
- If you will be having surgery on your legs, you may find it helpful to try to build your upper body strength—especially if you will be on crutches.
- If you smoke or use products with nicotine, it is important to stop using them. [Smoking almost doubles the time it takes broken bones to heal.](#)
- Set up your Online Patient Portal Account by visiting www.MyLifeBridgeHealth.org.

THE MONTH BEFORE SURGERY:

- Attend your preoperative examination and make sure that your primary care physician faxes the completed preoperative examination forms to our office. Obtain copies of the forms for your records. Bring these copies with you to the presurgical visit at the ICLL and on the day you come in for surgery.
- If you have other health conditions, obtain medical clearance from your specialist(s) and obtain copies of these forms for your records.
- Have preoperative blood tests done.
- [Donate blood \(if necessary\).](#)
- Obtain school forms (e.g., home tutoring, taking medication at school) and work forms (e.g., FMLA, disability leave), complete the portions for which you are responsible, and mail or fax the forms to the ICLL.
- Obtain a handicap parking application (if necessary).
- Make physical therapy appointments if you plan to receive therapy at a local facility instead of at the ICLL.
- Look into transportation options that you can use while undergoing treatment. Determine whether you will need a [special car seat to accommodate a child with an external fixator or spica cast.](#)
- If applicable, check with your car insurance company and DMV or MVA regarding the legal implications of driving while wearing an external fixator. Your surgeon might allow you to drive while undergoing treatment.

- Modify clothing, including underwear and a swimsuit, if you will be receiving an external fixator. [Consider external fixator covers.](#)
- Make sure the ICLL has your up-to-date contact information
- If you have concerns about your health insurance benefits, please contact us.

TWO WEEKS BEFORE SURGERY:

- Preoperative examination forms are **due now**. Confirm that your primary care physician's or pediatrician's office has sent the appropriate paperwork and make sure that you have a copy of the completed paperwork.
- [Make sure you know which medications you should continue taking and which medications you should stop taking prior to surgery.](#)
- Have several weeks' worth of meals prepared and frozen.
- Inspect the house or hotel room for hazards (e.g., scatter rugs).
- If you would like your bed to be on the ground floor of your residence, set it up now.
- Buy multivitamins and liquid antibacterial soap (if external fixator).

THE WEEK OF SURGERY:

- Have pregnancy test at your doctor's office or at Sinai Hospital (all women/girls of child-bearing age).
- Provide the surgeon's secretary and the staff member at the registration desk with your contact information for when you will be in Baltimore.
- Attend your presurgical visit at the ICLL. Remember to bring copies of your preoperative examination forms with you in case our office has not received them.
- Have blood drawn at Sinai Hospital's Pre-Anesthesia Screening Services (PASS) if you might be receiving a blood transfusion.
- Adult and teen patients who will be treated with an external fixator should attend an external fixator class at the ICLL. Parents of pediatric patients will attend this class the day of surgery.
- [Make sure you know which medications you should continue taking and which medications you should stop taking prior to surgery.](#)
- [Remember the rules about fasting before surgery.](#)
- Call the surgeon's secretary to obtain the time of surgery a few days before it is scheduled. For some surgeons, this is not determined until the day before surgery.
- If your child is having surgery, familiarize yourself with the [visiting policy for the Pediatric Unit.](#)

THE NIGHT BEFORE SURGERY:

- [Fast the night before surgery.](#)
- Make sure you know which medications you can take and which you should stop taking.
- Items to have packed before surgery:
 - Medical insurance information
 - Picture identification (driver's license or passport)
 - Copies of the preoperative examination forms and other medical clearance forms (if applicable) that your primary care physician, pediatrician, and/or specialist filled out.
 - A bag with books, toys, crafts, electronic devices, and games for children and parents
 - Snacks and drinks for family members (The patient will be fasting and will not be allowed to eat or drink before surgery.)
 - Change for vending machines

THE DAY OF SURGERY:

- [Fast the day of surgery.](#)
- [Make sure you know which medications you should continue taking and which medications you should stop taking.](#)
- Arrive on time for your surgery (typically you need to be at the hospital 2 hours before your scheduled time).
- Report to the Patient Registration office, which is located in the main lobby of the hospital.
- If applicable, parents of younger children will attend an external fixator or internal lengthening rod class while the child is in surgery.
- Make sure that the desk in the operating room waiting area has a family member's cell phone number or other contact information.