

Question checklist for surgery

Asking your doctor questions will help you make an informed choice. You may want to include some of the questions below in your own list.

Information about the surgeon

- Do you work in a multidisciplinary team (MDT)?
- Do you specialise in this type of surgery? How were you trained?
- How many times have you done this surgery?
- Which hospitals do you operate in?

Treatment choice

- Why do I need surgery?
- Are there other treatment choices for me?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of surgery for me?
- How successful is this type of surgery for this type of cancer?
- Are there clinical practice guidelines on how to treat this type of cancer?
- How much does the surgery cost? Are there any out-of-pocket expenses not covered by Medicare or my private health cover?
- Are there extra costs I should know about, such as costs related to anaesthesia?
- Can the cost be reduced if I can't afford it?
- Can I get a second opinion?
- How long do I have to make a decision?
- Will I need other treatment before or after surgery?
- Are there any clinical trials or research studies I could join?

The surgery

- How can I prepare myself for surgery and improve my recovery?
- What type of surgery will I have (e.g. open surgery or keyhole surgery)?
- What exactly will you do during the operation? Will you remove part of the tumour or all of the cancer?
- How long will the surgery take?
- Could your plans for the surgery change? Why?
- What anaesthetic will I receive? How will it be given?
- When will I meet the anaesthetist?
- What are the potential risks and complications of the surgery?
- Will I need a blood transfusion?
- Where will I have the surgery?
- How will we know if the surgery was successful?

Side effects and recovery

- What are the side effects of the surgery (e.g. will it affect my mobility, diet, ability to work, fertility, sex life)? What are the long-term impacts?
- Will I have tubes and drains?
- Will I have a lot of pain? What will be done about this?

- How long will I be in hospital? How long will it take to recover?
- Will I need rehabilitation? Will I have it as an inpatient or outpatient?
- When I go home, will I be given written information about my after-care?
- What kind of support is available to people who have this type of surgery?
- Are there any complementary therapies that might help me?

Before leaving hospital

- Will the stitches need to be taken out or will they dissolve?
- Will the wound dressing need to be changed? Who will do this?
- Can I eat my usual diet?
- What problems should I look out for when I go home?
- Who should I call if I have a problem?
- How often will I need check-ups?
- Can I have a shower or bath?
- When do I need to see my surgeon for a follow-up?
- When can I go back to work? How soon can I do my usual activities (e.g. exercise, housework, driving)?
- What medicines do I need to take?

My questions		