

# After Your Surgery

## Frequently asked questions

### *What is the PACU?*

The PACU is the post-anesthesia care unit. After your surgery, you will be taken there. This is where you will recover from anesthesia under close observation. A nurse will monitor your vital signs and make sure your recovery is going smoothly.

### *Can my family and friends visit me in the PACU?*

With your permission, we will keep your family and friends updated about how you are doing. They can visit you in the PACU once you are awake and request their visit. Only two visitors are allowed in the PACU at a time because it is a shared patient space.

### *Why is my throat sore?*

If you had a breathing tube during surgery, your throat may be sore. Generally, this is a temporary discomfort. With your nurse's and doctor's approval, you can try some ice chips to ensure you can swallow and then you can drink some cold or warm water, whichever makes your throat feel better. You can also use a sore throat spray or throat lozenge to help with the discomfort.

### *Why is my body sore?*

Along with your surgical incision, your body may be sore or swollen from the way you were positioned during surgery. Each surgeon may use a different approach, which means you are not always lying on your back. You may also be in one position for a long period of time, which can make you sore.

### *What will my energy level be like?*

Every surgery and every patient is different, but it's important to listen to your body and rest until you feel like you have enough energy to go back to your normal routine.

### *I am going home on the same day. Will someone follow up with me?*

If you are having day/outpatient surgery, a registered nurse will call you the day after your surgery to check on you and answer any questions you may have. If you are staying overnight, you will have a dedicated nursing team helping you through the healing process.

### *Will I have new prescriptions?*

Your nurse will review any new medications with you and your family, including what the medication is for, how much and when to take it, major side effects and possible adverse reactions. Make sure you know whether your doctor wrote your prescriptions on a piece of paper or electronically sent them directly to your pharmacy. If you are having surgery later in the day or have a long drive home, let your nurse know so your family member can get the prescription filled at a pharmacy close to the hospital. If a family member is picking up pain medications on your behalf, Kentucky state pain control laws (KASPER) require your family member to know *your* Social Security number and *your* address. The pharmacy will also take a picture of your family member's driver's license.

To help you prepare for your surgery, we encourage you and your family to visit the Norton Brownsboro Hospital Surgery website at [NortonHealthcare.com/NBH-Surgery](https://www.nortonhealthcare.com/NBH-Surgery), where you can view important information about our surgery center and what to expect on your surgery day.

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## Frequently asked questions (*continued*)

### *I was prescribed pain medication. What do I need to know?*

Your home care instructions will include the specific pain medication information you need to know. In general, one of the most common side effects of pain medications is constipation. Speak with your doctor about options for constipation. Do not drive while taking pain medication and do not take pain medication on an empty stomach, which can make you nauseated. Report any new, increasing or unrelieved pain to your doctor. It is important to speak openly about pain control with your doctor. If you are already taking pain medication at home, let your doctor know before surgery. Some pain medications cannot be called in to a pharmacy, so letting your doctor know in advance will help us make sure you do not have to go without pain control for any length of time. If you have concerns about your pain control after your surgery, call your doctor's office.

### *What needs to happen before I leave the hospital?*

Your doctor and care team will decide if you are ready to go home. Before that happens, your home care instructions will be reviewed with you and a family member or friend. All IVs and monitors will be disconnected and your family or friends should gather your belongings. You will then be escorted in a wheelchair to your waiting ride. For 24 hours after anesthesia, we recommend you have a family member or friend stay with you and you make no legal or life-changing decisions. You should not drive for at least 24 hours, possibly longer if specified by your doctor.

### *What about billing?*

When you get your final bill from Norton Healthcare, call the number provided on the bill if you need help or have any questions. You can also visit [NortonHealthcare.com/HospitalBilling](https://www.nortonhealthcare.com/HospitalBilling) for information. For questions about financial assistance, call Norton Healthcare Customer Service at **(502) 479-6300** or **(800) 874-3979**.

### *How do I obtain a copy of my records?*

Norton Healthcare offers MyChart to our patients. MyChart is a secure website where you can access your personal health information. Existing MyChart users and new patients can get started at [NortonHealthcare.com/MyChart](https://www.nortonhealthcare.com/MyChart). Most results are posted on MyChart within seven days, however some specialized tests may take longer. If you cannot find what you are looking for in MyChart, you may call the medical records department at **(502) 629-8766**.

**You will be given individual home care instructions before you leave the hospital. Make sure you or your family member understands the instructions and repeats them back to the nurse before you leave.**

### Your home care instructions may include:

Restrictions on activities, such as lifting, walking, driving, etc.	When you can take a shower or bath	Follow-up appointment information
Physical therapy if ordered by your doctor	Home health information if you need home health	Medical equipment information if you need medical equipment
When your staples, sutures, Steri-Strips, pumps or drains can be removed and who removes them	Incision care instructions and warning signs of infection	When to call your doctor and when to call 911
Medication instructions	Diet instructions	Your care team contact information



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