SYDNEY
SPINE INSTITUTE

Sydney Spine Institute
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PATIENT GUIDELINES

General Preoperative Guidelines

Minimally invasive spinal surgery and spinal fusion

Admission paperwork

Once you have made the decision to have surgery, a booking letter will be sent to the hospital. You will be required to sign an informed consent form upon discussing the procedure in detail with Dr van Gelder. You will then receive an email from our office with the eAdmissions link to complete an admission and patient history online and submit through to the hospital.

Preoperative health checks

Depending on your medical history, some health checks may be required prior to your admission.

- If you have not had any recent blood tests, you will be given a pathology referral, or a letter will be sent to your GP. If you have a known medical condition (e.g. heart or lung disease), you may require clearance from your treating doctor.
- If you are a smoker, a chest X-ray will be required. Patients who smoke are recommended to stop for at least three weeks before surgery and three weeks after surgery. It is advisable to quit because smoking interferes with healing.
- If you are having a fusion, it is imperative to stop smoking before and after the operation. Smoking impedes the fusion.

Important information about blood-thinning medications

If you take any blood-thinning medications, including aspirin, warfarin, Plavix (clopidogrel), or other anticoagulant or antiplatelet medications, it is essential that you inform Dr van Gelder before your surgery.

These medications can increase the risk of bleeding and serious complications during and after surgery. Some may need to be stopped a week or more before your procedure, depending on the medication and your medical circumstances. Do not stop taking any prescribed medication unless advised to do so by your treating doctor or surgical team.

Our office will email you a preoperative health questionnaire, which includes specific questions about your medications. Please complete and return this questionnaire as soon as possible so that any necessary adjustments to your medications can be arranged safely and well in advance of your surgery.

Preoperative physiotherapy consultation

It would be helpful to have a preoperative assessment with a specialist spine physiotherapist who has experience with this surgery. This will assist in assessing your functional capacity prior to surgery for postoperative comparisons. It will provide education about the surgery, realistic expectations and movement in the postoperative period.

Sydney Spine Institute offers a dedicated spine physiotherapy and surgery optimisation service focused on patients undergoing spine surgery. For other options, please consult our staff or your GP.

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Before admission

Admission to hospital is usually on the morning of the day of surgery. The hospital will phone you the day before between 4–8 pm to advise you of the required arrival time. You will also be given fasting instructions. You will need to stop eating and drinking for a certain period before your surgery.

- Shower on the morning of your surgery.
- Do not apply any powder, creams, lotions or make-up.
- Follow any specific instructions from your doctor and hospital nursing staff.

What to bring

It is essential that you bring the following items to the hospital:

- All entitlement cards, e.g. Medicare, Safety Net, Veterans' Affairs and Health Fund cards.
- Relevant X-rays, scans or films.
- Current medication in its original containers and prescriptions, including repeat forms.
- Payment of your private health insurance excess, if applicable, which is to be made directly to the hospital.
- Reading material and/or something else to do.
- A hard case for your glasses.

If you are staying overnight, also bring a small overnight bag containing:

- Sleepwear, dressing gown and slippers.
- Personal toiletries.
- A charger for your phone or tablet.

Do not bring

- Valuables, including jewellery and large sums of money.
- Unnecessary clothing.
- Large luggage and suitcases.

