

# Preparing for Surgery & Recovery

Home setup · recovery aids · nutrition

## Get Ready to Heal Well

*Simple steps before surgery and for your recovery at home*

Use this guide alongside your **Pre-Surgical Checklist**. A little planning now makes recovery safer, smoother, and faster.

### 1 Final preparations (the weeks before)

**Quit smoking & vaping now.** Even a few weeks smoke-free improves bone and wound healing and lowers infection risk. Try to stop at least **4 weeks** before surgery, and limit alcohol in the weeks beforehand. Ask us for help quitting.

**Handle dental work early.** Avoid dental work, **including cleanings, for 6 weeks before and 6 months after** surgery. Schedule any cleaning before that window.

**Fill prescriptions ahead of time.** Pick up your pain, anti-inflammatory, blood-thinner, and stool-softener prescriptions **before** surgery so they are ready when you get home.

**Tell us if you get sick.** Call the office if you develop a fever, cold, flu, COVID, or any new rash or skin opening near the surgical area — surgery may need to be rescheduled.

**Get health conditions well-controlled.** Work with your primary care provider to keep **blood sugar (diabetes)**, blood pressure, and weight in good shape — this lowers your risk of infection and slow healing.

**Line up physical therapy before surgery.** Formal PT is essential and often begins **1–3 days after** surgery. Choose your PT facility and book your first appointments **now**.

**Plan help & time off.** Arrange a ride, an adult to stay with you the first day and night, help with meals, pets, and kids, and any work or FMLA paperwork.

### 2 Prepare your home

**Set up a recovery station.** One comfortable chair or bed with everything within arm's reach: phone & charger, water, medications, tissues, remote, snacks, glasses.

**Make the bathroom safe.** Add a non-slip mat, a shower chair or bench, a hand-held shower head, and grab bars. Consider a raised toilet seat.

**Kitchen & daily life.** Pre-make and freeze meals, move everyday items to counter height, and keep a phone within reach at all times.

**Clear the path.** Remove throw rugs, cords, and clutter. Make wide walkways for a walker or crutches and add night-lights between the bed and bathroom.

**Sleep smart.** If you can, sleep on the main floor to avoid stairs. Keep a pillow or wedge handy to elevate the surgical arm or leg and reduce swelling.

**Plan for stairs.** Limit trips up and down. Set up a main-floor living space for the first week or two if possible.



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### 3 Recovery aids to have ready

GREEN = WE PROVIDE IT

**Ice / cold therapy** — Dr. Pettit provides an ice machine on the day of surgery. Have a few clean cloths ready; never put ice directly on skin, and no more than 20 minutes at a time.

**Compression (TED) stockings** — provided; wear as instructed to reduce swelling and clot risk.

**Sling, brace, or immobilizer** — only if prescribed for your procedure; wear exactly as directed.

- ✓ Walker or crutches (as directed) for support with weight-bearing
- ✓ Reacher / grabber tool to pick things up without bending
- ✓ Raised toilet seat and a shower chair or bench
- ✓ Grab bars and a non-slip bath mat
- ✓ Long-handled sponge, sock aid, and long shoehorn for dressing & bathing
- ✓ Elevation pillow or foam wedge to keep the limb raised
- ✓ Loose, comfortable clothing (roomy shorts for knee; button-front shirts for shoulder)
- ✓ A walker bag, basket, or small backpack to carry items hands-free
- ✓ Sturdy chair with armrests; secure stair handrail; night-lights

### 4 Eat to heal

**Protein at every meal & snack.** The #1 nutrient for healing tissue, bone, and muscle. Aim for a palm-sized portion each meal — lean meat, fish, eggs, Greek yogurt, cottage cheese, beans, or tofu. Most people need more protein while healing.

**Calcium & vitamin D for bone.** Dairy or fortified alternatives and leafy greens for calcium; sunlight and fatty fish for vitamin D.

**Fiber & fluids to prevent constipation.** Pain medicines cause constipation. Eat fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and prunes, and drink water throughout the day.

**Food first.** Because you stop supplements 2 weeks before surgery, get these nutrients from **food**. Ask Dr. Pettit before restarting any supplement after surgery — expensive “surgery recovery” supplement stacks are no better than a good diet. If you have diabetes or kidney disease, get individualized advice from your provider or a dietitian and keep blood sugar well-controlled.

**Vitamin C for collagen.** Citrus, strawberries, bell peppers, broccoli, and kiwi help build the collagen that repairs skin, tendon, and ligament.

**Zinc & iron for healing & blood.** Meat, poultry, seafood, beans, nuts, seeds, and whole grains. Pair plant iron with vitamin-C foods to absorb it better.

**Choose anti-inflammatory foods.** Berries, leafy greens, fatty fish, olive oil, and nuts. Limit alcohol, added sugar, and heavily processed foods.



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