

# Perioperative care in adults

Information for the public

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## Having an operation (surgery): the care you should expect

About 11 million people have surgery each year in the NHS. Most people recover well. However, no surgery is ever risk-free and problems can still happen, especially in complicated surgery or when people have long-term health problems, such as heart, lung or liver disease, diabetes or obesity.

We want this guideline to make surgery safer for everyone by making sure:

- people are given better information to prepare for surgery
- surgical teams know the safest procedures to use before, during and after surgery
- people always know who to contact in their care team if they need advice
- people are offered the right pain relief after surgery.

## Making decisions together

Decisions about treatment and care are best when they are made together. Your healthcare professionals should give you clear information, talk with you about your options and listen carefully to your views and concerns.

To help you make decisions, think about and discuss the following with your care team:

- What the benefits and risks of surgery are for you
- What are you most worried about – are there risks or downsides to surgery that worry you more than others?
- Will you need to make changes to your lifestyle before or after surgery?
- What happens if you don't want to have surgery?

If you can't understand the information you are given, tell your care team.

Read more about [making decisions about your care](#).

## Where can I find out more?

The [NHS website](#) has more information about having an operation (surgery).

The organisations below can give you more advice and support.

- [Royal College of Anaesthetists, patient information resources](#)
- [Royal College of Surgeons, information on having surgery](#)

NICE is not responsible for the content of these websites.

To share an experience of care you have received, contact your local [Healthwatch](#).

We wrote this guideline with people who have had surgery, their families and carers, and staff who treat and support them. All the decisions are based on the best research available.

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