

Five smart ways to prepare for elective surgery

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(HealthDay)—No one looks forward to surgery, but if you're able to

have an elective procedure—meaning on your schedule—rather than an emergency operation, taking certain steps in the weeks beforehand will lead to a better outcome and easier recovery.

1. Work on getting healthier through [aerobic exercise](#), which improves [lung function](#) by expanding the [air sacs](#) in your lungs. This, in turn, will help keep them from collapsing after anesthesia, a common risk. Practice deep breathing for the same reason. Breathing also acts as a [relaxation technique](#) to ease any anxiety you're feeling. Positive thinking and visualizing a successful [surgery](#) and quick recovery will help, too.
2. Boost your diet. Find ways to take in more nutrients from fruit, vegetables, lean protein and whole grains. This sets up your body for better healing and is especially important if you have diabetes, which can slow healing. If you have diabetes, make sure your blood glucose tests are in your recommended range.
3. In addition to its other ills, smoking interferes with [healing](#). If you smoke, your surgeon may insist that you stop before surgery. So why not use surgery as your motivation to quit permanently *now*?
4. Other preparations are specifically tied to the day of your surgery. If you take any drugs or supplements that thin the blood, you'll need to stop them about a week in advance. So tell your surgeon about *all* the prescription and over-the-counter drugs and supplements you take.
5. Review all pre-surgery directions carefully, including when to stop taking other medications, and eating and drinking in the hours before surgery. Be sure you understand how the surgery is done, how to care for yourself once home, and how to look for danger signs that merit a call to the doctor.

Whether you get this information from a handout or by watching a video through a special online service, reviewing it carefully will make you a

better patient.

More information: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has additional tips to help [avoid post-surgery infections](#) and ensure a speedy recovery.

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