



## PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# Information for Family and Friends for the Day of Surgery

This information explains what to expect on the day your friend or family member has surgery at MSK's main hospital.



We sometimes update our visitor policy to keep our patients and staff safe and healthy. Go to [www.msk.org/visit](http://www.msk.org/visit) for the most up-to-date information.

## COVID-19 information

We understand how important it is to be with your loved one before and after their surgery or procedure. Thank you for your understanding as we do all we can to keep our patients safe.

Masks must be worn in a patient's hospital room and in all patient care areas. You must wear a mask in waiting rooms. You can choose to wear a mask in common areas. This includes hallways, elevators, lobbies, and in the cafeteria.

We have masks available at our building entrances. Where masks are required, you must wear the mask we give you.

For adult patients, visitors must be at least 12 years old. [For pediatric patients](#), visitors can be as young as 8 years old.

Please remember that kindness matters. MSK is a place for healing. There is zero tolerance for any disrespectful behavior. Thank you in advance for your understanding.

## Screening for COVID-19

We screen all visitors for recent COVID-19 symptoms. Anyone who has symptoms will not be allowed to visit.

**Visitors who have tested positive for COVID-19:** You can visit only if you no longer have symptoms **and** it's been at least 10 days since you first tested positive.

MSK asks that all visitors are fully vaccinated against COVID-19. You do not need to show us proof of vaccination or a negative COVID-19 test.

## Before the surgery

We will ask the patient for the contact information for the person who will meet with the surgeon after the surgery. This person will also get updates from the nurse liaison during the surgery.

If this is an outpatient procedure, we will ask for the contact information for the person who will take them home. Patients having a procedure with anesthesia (medicine to make you sleep) must have a care partner who will take them home.

Once the patient checks in at the concierge desk, they will go to the Presurgical Center (PSC). There, they will be examined before their surgery. Sometimes, they may need to wait before they are admitted to the PSC.

**Patients may have 1 visitor at a time.** Visitors can wait in the lobby or cafeteria during the procedure if there is enough room. Otherwise, you must leave MSK until the patient is able to have a visitor after the procedure.

When the operating room (OR) is ready, a member of the surgical team will take the patient into the OR. They will get the patient ready for surgery.

Please remember the following:

- **Do not bring food or drinks to the waiting area.** Patients must not eat or drink before their surgery or procedure.

- Our patients are at high risk for infection. Do not visit if you have any COVID-19, cold, or flu symptoms. This includes fever, sneezing, sniffles, or a cough.
- You must wear a mask in all patient hospital rooms. Please see our [Visitor Policy](#) for information about where you must wear a mask.
- We ask patients not to bring any valuables with them to the hospital. Anything valuable must be left at home or with the care partner.
- Sometimes surgeries are delayed. We make every effort to tell you when this happens.

## During the surgery

After the patient is taken to the OR, please wait in the main lobby on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor. This is where you will get updates from the nurse liaison. If there is not enough room in the lobby or cafeteria, visitors must leave MSK. They can return when the patient is able to have a visitor after the procedure.

While you're waiting, here are some things you can do:

- Food and drinks are available in the cafeteria and gift shop. You can also bring your own food and eat it in the cafeteria.
- The coat-check room is located at the bottom of the escalator on the ground level. It's open Monday through Friday from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Wireless Internet access is available in most areas of the hospital. The Wi-Fi network name is MSK\_guest. You can also use the computers in the room off the main lobby.
- Please be respectful of others while using your cellphone. Use the designated area for any calls on your cellphone. It may be helpful to bring your phone charger with you to the hospital.
- The Mary French Rockefeller All Faiths Chapel is an interfaith chapel. It's in room M106 near the main lobby on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor. It's open 24 hours a day for meditation and prayer.
- The Patient Recreation Pavilion is open daily from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. for

patients and their visitors. Children are allowed in the pavilion as long as they're supervised by an adult. The pavilion has arts and crafts, a library, an outdoor area, and scheduled entertainment events. To get to the pavilion, take the M elevators to the 15<sup>th</sup> floor.

## **Surgery updates**

A nurse liaison will keep you updated on the progress of the patient's surgery. They will give you information about the patient. The nurse liaison will call a family member's cellphone to give an update.

To contact the nurse liaison:

- From outside of the hospital, call 212-639-2000. Ask for beeper 9000.
- Ask the information desk staff to contact the nurse liaison for you.

## **After the surgery**

### **Limited visitors to patients in the Post Anesthesia Care Unit**

After surgery, we will take the patient to the Post Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU). When patients first get to the PACU, they're often sleepy and want to rest. Our 6<sup>th</sup> floor staff will let visitors know when your loved one is ready for a visit.

**Patients** in the PACU are allowed 1 visitor a day, between 10 a.m. and 10 p.m. That visit can last 15 to 30 minutes.

**Pediatric patients** are allowed 1 visitor a day between 10 a.m. and 10 p.m. There's no time limit on visiting a child.

**Outpatients** are allowed 1 visitor a day, for about 15 to 30 minutes. To let the patient rest and recover, we will coordinate the timing of this visit. It will be close to the patient's discharge time. Your care team will let you know when you can have a visitor.

Except for caregivers of pediatric patients, no visitor is allowed to stay

overnight in the PACU with a patient.

Please follow these guidelines before your visit in the PACU:

- Put on an alcohol-based hand sanitizer (such as Purell®) or wash your hands before entering. There are hand sanitizer stations located throughout the hospital.
- Do not bring food or flowers into the PACU.
  - Flowers can be stored in the flower room located on the entrance floor of the main hospital. Patients usually are allowed to have them once they move to their hospital room.

While visiting someone in the PACU:

- Speak quietly.
- Respect the privacy of other patients by staying at the bedside of your friend or family member.
- If any PACU patient needs special nursing attention, we may ask you to leave or delay your visit.
- After your visit, a staff member will direct you to elevators that will take you to the lobby.

We will give you a phone number to call into the PACU (sometimes called the recovery room). When you call, we can update you about the patient's recovery. If you need more updates from the recovery room, please identify 1 person who will call.

**Note:** We allow 2 care partners to visit a minor in the PACU.

As soon as the patient is awake and ready, we will give them their personal belongings, including their phone. If they don't have a phone, we will give them a way to contact you.

If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit [www.mskcc.org/pe](http://www.mskcc.org/pe) to search our virtual library.

---

Information for Family and Friends for the Day of Surgery - Last updated on April 30, 2023

All rights owned and reserved by Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center