

About Your Gallbladder Removal Surgery

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About Your Surgery

This guide will help you prepare for surgery to remove your gallbladder (cholecystectomy) at Memorial Sloan Kettering (MSK), and help you understand what to expect during your recovery. Read through this guide at least once before your surgery and then use it as a reference in the days leading up to your surgery. Bring this guide with you every time you come to MSK, including the day of your surgery, so that you and your healthcare team can refer to it throughout your care.

Your Gallbladder

Your gallbladder is a small, tear-drop shaped organ located under your liver (see Figure 1). Its main function is to store bile. Bile is a substance that is made in the liver and helps your body digest fats. Your gallbladder releases bile when food, especially fatty food, enters the digestive tract. When your gallbladder is removed, your liver will take over this function.

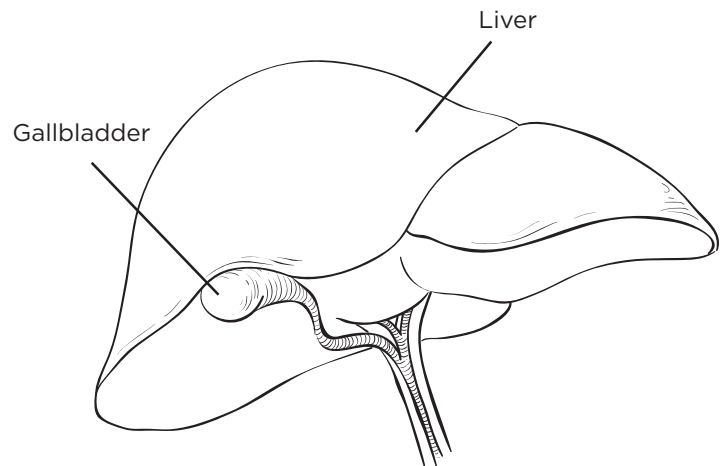


Figure 1. The gallbladder

Gallbladder Removal Surgery (Cholecystectomy)

Cholecystectomy is a surgery that is done to remove your gallbladder. Your gallbladder can be removed in one of two ways—laparoscopically or through an open incision (surgical cut). Your surgeon will speak with you about the best surgery option for you.

Laparoscopic cholecystectomy

In a laparoscopic cholecystectomy, your surgeon will make 4 very small incisions (see Figure 2). Each one will be about 1/2 inch long.

One of the incisions will be in or near your navel (belly button). Your surgeon will insert an instrument called a laparoscope through this incision. The laparoscope is a thin tube that has a video camera at the tip. Carbon dioxide gas is blown into your abdomen so that it expands. This makes room for your surgeon to see your organs and tissues. Other instruments will be inserted through the other incisions to cut your gallbladder. Your gallbladder will then be removed through the incision at the navel.

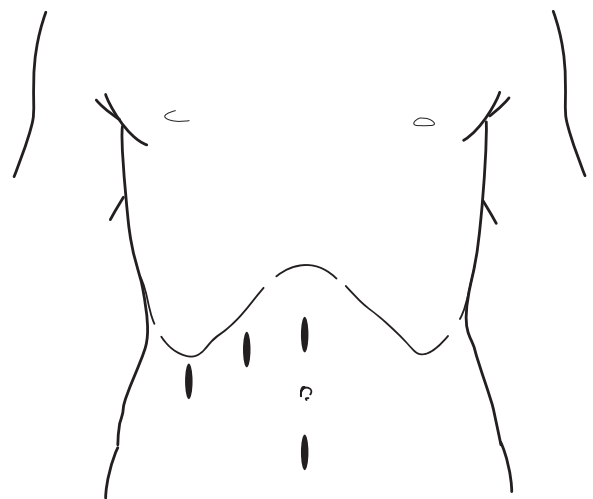


Figure 2. Laparoscopic cholecystectomy incisions

The laparoscopic cholecystectomy takes about 2 hours. Some patients are able to go home the day of the surgery.

Open cholecystectomy

In about 10% of cases, the gallbladder needs to be removed through a larger incision on the right side of your abdomen. This surgery takes about 2 hours.

The information in this section will help you prepare for your surgery. Read through this section when your surgery is scheduled and refer to it as your surgery date gets closer. It contains important information about what you need to do before your surgery. Write down any questions you have and be sure to ask your doctor or nurse.

Preparing for Your Surgery

You and your healthcare team will work together to prepare for your surgery.

About Drinking Alcohol

The amount of alcohol you drink can affect you during and after your surgery. It is important that you talk with your healthcare providers about your alcohol intake so that we can plan your care.

- Stopping alcohol suddenly can cause seizures, delirium, and death. If we know you are at risk for these complications, we can prescribe medications to help prevent them.
- If you drink alcohol regularly, you may be at risk for other complications during and after your surgery. These include bleeding, infections, heart problems, greater dependence on nursing care, and longer hospital stay.

Here are things you can do to prevent problems before your surgery:

- Be honest with your healthcare provider about how much alcohol you drink.
- Try to stop drinking alcohol once your surgery is planned. If you develop a headache, nausea, increased anxiety, or cannot sleep after you stop drinking, tell your doctor right away. These are early signs of alcohol withdrawal and can be treated.
- Tell your healthcare provider if you cannot stop drinking.
- Ask us any questions you have about drinking and surgery. As always, all of your treatment information will be kept confidential.

About Smoking

People who smoke can have breathing problems when they have surgery. Stopping even for a few days before surgery can help. If you want to quit, call our Tobacco Treatment Program at 212-610-0507. You can also ask your nurse about the program.

Help us keep you safe during your surgery by telling us if any of the following statements apply to you.

- I take a blood thinner. Some examples are aspirin, heparin, warfarin (Coumadin®), clopidogrel (Plavix®), tinzaparin (Innohep®), and enoxaparin (Lovenox®). There are others, so be sure your doctor knows all the medications you're taking.
- I take prescription medications, including patches and creams.
- I take any over-the-counter medications, herbs, vitamins, minerals, or natural or home remedies.
- I have a pacemaker, automatic implantable cardioverter-defibrillator (AICD), or other heart device.
- I have sleep apnea.
- I have had a problem with anesthesia in the past.
- I have allergies, including to latex.
- I am not willing to receive a blood transfusion.
- I drink alcohol.
- I smoke.
- I use recreational drugs.

About Sleep Apnea

Sleep apnea is a common breathing disorder that causes a person to stop breathing for short periods while sleeping. The most common type is obstructive sleep apnea (OSA). This means that the airway becomes completely blocked during sleep, so no air can get through. OSA can cause serious problems when you have surgery. Please tell us if you have sleep apnea or if you think you may have it. If you use a breathing machine (such as a CPAP) for sleep apnea, bring it with you the day of your surgery.

Within **30** Days of Your Surgery

Presurgical Testing

Before your surgery, you will have an appointment for presurgical testing (PST). The date, time, and location of your PST appointment will be printed on the appointment reminder from your surgeon's office.

You can eat and take your usual medications the day of your PST appointment. During your appointment, you will meet with a nurse practitioner who works closely with anesthesiology staff (doctors and specialized nurses who will be giving you medication to put you to sleep during your surgery). He or she will review your medical and surgical history with you. You will have tests, including an electrocardiogram (EKG) to check your heart rhythm, a chest x-ray, blood tests, and any other tests necessary to plan your care. Your nurse practitioner may also recommend you see other healthcare providers.

Your nurse practitioner will talk with you about which medications you should take the morning of your surgery. To help you remember, we've left space for you to write these medications down on page 10 of this guide.

It is very helpful if you bring the following with you to your PST appointment:

- A list of all the medications you are taking, including patches and creams
- Results of any tests done outside of MSK, such as a cardiac stress test, echocardiogram (echo), or carotid doppler study
- The name(s) and telephone number(s) of your doctor(s)

Health Care Proxy

If you haven't already completed a Health Care Proxy form, we recommend you complete one now. A health care proxy is a legal document that identifies the person who will speak for you if you are unable to communicate for yourself. The person you identify is called your health care agent. If you are interested in completing a Health Care Proxy form, or to learn more, talk with your nurse. If you have completed one already, or if you have any other advanced directive, bring it with you to your next appointment.

Breathing and Coughing Exercises

Practice taking deep breaths and coughing before your surgery. You will be given an incentive spirometer to help expand your lungs. For more information, please read *How to Use Your Incentive Spirometer*, located in the "After Your Surgery" section of this guide. If you have any questions, ask your nurse or respiratory therapist.

Exercise

Try to do aerobic exercise every day, such as walking at least 1 mile, swimming, or biking. If it is cold outside, use stairs in your home or go to a mall or shopping market. Walking will help your body get into its best condition for your surgery and make your recovery faster and easier.

Eat a Healthy Diet

You should eat a well-balanced, healthy diet before your surgery. If you need help with your diet talk to your doctor or nurse about meeting with a dietitian.

10 Days Before Your Surgery

Stop Taking Certain Medications

If you take vitamin E, stop taking it 10 days before your surgery. If you take aspirin, ask your surgeon whether you should continue. Medications such as aspirin, medications that contain aspirin, and vitamin E can cause bleeding. For more information, please read *Common Medications Containing Aspirin and Other Nonsteroidal Anti-inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs)*, located in this section.

Purchase Hibiclens® Skin Cleanser

Hibiclens is a skin cleanser that kills germs for 6 hours after using it. Showering with Hibiclens before surgery will help reduce your risk of infection after surgery. Hibiclens is available at your local pharmacy without a prescription.

Purchase Clear Liquids

Purchase clear liquids to drink the day before your surgery. For a list of clear liquids that you can drink, please see the table on page 9.

7 Days Before Your Surgery

Stop Taking Herbal Remedies and Supplements

Stop taking herbal remedies or supplements 7 days before your surgery. If you take a multivitamin, talk with your doctor or nurse about whether you should continue. For more information, please read *Herbal Remedies and Cancer Treatment*, located in this section.

2 Days Before Your Surgery

Stop Taking Certain Medications

Stop taking nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) such as ibuprofen (e.g., Advil®, Motrin®) and naproxen (e.g., Aleve®). These medications can cause bleeding. For more information, please read *Common Medications Containing Aspirin and Other Nonsteroidal Anti-inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs)*, located in this section.

1 Day Before Your Surgery

Note the Time of Your Surgery

A clerk from the Admitting Office will call you after 2:00 PM the day before your surgery. He or she will tell you what time you should arrive at the hospital for your surgery. If you are scheduled for surgery on a Monday, you will be called on the Friday before. If you do not receive a call by 7:00 PM, please call 212-639-5014.



Use this area to write in information when the clerk calls:

Date: _____ Time: _____

Both locations are at 1275 York Avenue between East 67th and East 68th streets.

- Surgical Day Hospital (SDH), M elevator to 2nd floor
- Presurgical Center (PSC), B elevator to 6th floor

Begin a Clear Liquid Diet

You will need to follow a clear liquid diet the day before your surgery. A clear liquid diet includes only liquids you can see through. Examples are listed in the table below. You cannot eat any solid foods while on a clear liquid diet.

Food/ Beverage	Drink	Do Not Drink
Soups	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clear broth or bouillon• Clear consommé• Packaged vegetable, chicken, or beef broth	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Any products with particles of dried food or seasoning
Sweets	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gelatin, such as Jello®• Flavored ices• Hard candies, such as Lifesavers®	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All others
Beverages	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clear fruit juices such as cranberry, grape, apple• Soda, such as 7-Up®, Sprite®, ginger ale, seltzer, Gatorade®• Black coffee• Tea	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Juices with pulp• Nectars• Milk• Alcoholic beverages

Shower With Hibiclens

The night before your surgery, shower using the Hibiclens solution. To use Hibiclens, open the bottle and pour some solution into your hand or a washcloth. Rub it gently over your body from your neck to your waist and rinse. Do not let the solution get into your eyes, ears, mouth, or genital area. Do not use any other soap. Dry yourself off with a clean towel after your shower.

Sleep

Go to bed early and get a full night's sleep.



Do not eat or drink anything after midnight the night before your surgery. This includes water, hard candy, and gum.

Morning of Your Surgery

Shower With Hibiclens

Shower using Hibiclens just before you leave for the hospital. Use the Hibiclens the same way you did the night before. Do not use any other soap. Do not put on any lotion, cream, powder, deodorant, makeup, or perfume after your shower.

Take Your Medications as Instructed

If your doctor or nurse practitioner instructed you to take certain medications the morning of your surgery, take only those medications with a sip of water. Depending on what medications you take and the surgery you're having, this may be all, some, or none of your usual morning medications.

Medication	Dose	Doctor/Nurse
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Medication	Dose	Doctor/Nurse
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Medication	Dose	Doctor/Nurse
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Medication	Dose	Doctor/Nurse
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Do not eat or drink anything the morning of your surgery. This includes water, hard candy, and gum. Take any medication as instructed with a small sip of water.

Things to Remember

- Do not put on any lotions, creams, deodorants, makeup, powders, or perfumes.
- Do not wear any metal objects. Remove all jewelry, including body piercings. The equipment used during your surgery can cause burns if it touches metal.
- Leave valuables, such as credit cards, jewelry, or your checkbook at home.
- Before you are taken into the operating room, you will need to remove your eyeglasses, hearing aids, dentures, prosthetic device(s), wig, and religious articles, such as a rosary.
- If you wear contact lenses, wear your glasses instead.
- _____
- _____
- _____



What to Bring

- Sneakers that lace up. You may have some swelling in your feet. Lace-up sneakers can accommodate this swelling.
- Your portable music player, if you choose. However, someone will need to hold this item for you when you go into surgery.
- Your incentive spirometer, if you have one.
- Your breathing machine for sleep apnea (such as your CPAP), if you have one.
- If you have a case for your personal items, such as eyeglasses, hearing aid(s), dentures, prosthetic device(s), wig, and religious articles such as a rosary, bring it with you.
- Your Health Care Proxy form, if you have completed one.
- Your cell phone and charger.
- This guide. Your healthcare team will use this guide to teach you how to care for yourself after your surgery.
- _____
- _____
- _____

Parking When You Arrive

Parking at MSK is available in the garage on East 66th Street between York and First Avenues. To reach the garage, enter East 66th Street from York Avenue. The garage is located about a quarter of a block in from York Avenue, on the right hand (north) side of the street. There is a pedestrian tunnel that you can walk through that connects the garage to the hospital. If you have questions about prices, call 212-639-2338.

There are also other garages located on East 69th Street between First and Second Avenues, East 67th Street between York and First Avenues, and East 65th Street between First and Second Avenues.

Once You're in the Hospital

You will be asked to state and spell your name and date of birth many times. This is for your safety. Patients with the same or similar names may be having surgery on the same day.

Tell your nurse about medications you've taken

A nurse will meet with you before your surgery. Tell him or her the dose of any medications (including patches and creams) you took after midnight and the time you took them.

Get Dressed for Surgery

You will be given a hospital gown, robe, and nonskid socks.

Meet With Your Anesthesiologist

He or she will:

- Review your medical history with you.
- Talk with you about your comfort and safety during your surgery.
- Talk with you about the kind of anesthesia you will receive.
- Answer any questions you may have about your anesthesia.



P = Parking

M = Memorial Sloan Kettering

Prepare for Surgery

Once your nurse has seen you, 1 or 2 visitors can keep you company as you wait for your surgery to begin. When it is time for your surgery, your visitor(s) will be shown to the waiting area. Your visitors should read *Information for Family and Friends for the Day of Surgery* located in this section.

You will walk into the operating room or you can be taken in on a stretcher. A member of the operating room team will help you onto the operating bed. Compression boots will be placed on your lower legs. These gently inflate and deflate to help circulation in your legs.

Your anesthesiologist will place an intravenous (IV) line into a vein, usually in your arm or hand. The IV line will be used to give you fluids and anesthesia (medication to make you sleep) during your surgery.

Once you are fully asleep, a breathing tube will be placed through your mouth and into your windpipe to help you breathe. You will also have a urinary catheter placed to drain urine from your bladder.

Once your surgery is finished, your incision will be closed with staples or with stitches that will absorb as you are healing. Steri-Strips™ (thin pieces of tape) will be placed directly on your incision and covered with a bandage. Your breathing tube is usually taken out while you are still in the operating room.

Common Medications Containing Aspirin and Other Nonsteroidal Anti-inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs)

This information will help you identify medications that contain aspirin and other nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs). It's important to stop these medications before many cancer treatments.

Medications such as aspirin and other NSAIDs, vitamin E, and COX-2 inhibitors can increase your risk of bleeding during cancer treatment. These medications affect your platelets, which are blood cells that clot to prevent bleeding. If you take aspirin or other NSAIDs, vitamin E, or a COX-2 inhibitor such as celecoxib (Celebrex[®]), tell your doctor or nurse. He or she will tell you if you need to stop taking these medications before your treatment. You will also find instructions in the information about the treatment you're having.

If you're having surgery:

- Stop taking medications that contain aspirin or vitamin E 10 days before your surgery or as directed by your doctor. If you take aspirin because you've had a problem with your heart or you've had a stroke, be sure to talk with your doctor before you stop taking it.
- Stop taking NSAIDs 48 hours before your surgery or as directed by your doctor.
- Ask your doctor if you should continue taking a COX-2 inhibitor.

If you're having a procedure in Radiology (including Interventional Radiology, Interventional Mammography, and General Radiology):

- If you take aspirin because you've had a problem with your heart or you've had a stroke, be sure to talk with your doctor before you stop taking it. If your doctor instructs you to stop taking aspirin, you should stop 5 days before your procedure or as directed by your doctor.
- Stop taking NSAIDs 24 hours before your procedure.
- Stop taking medications that contain vitamin E 10 days before your procedure, or as directed by your doctor.

Chemotherapy can decrease your platelet count, which can increase your risk of bleeding. Whether you're just starting chemotherapy or you've been receiving it, talk with your doctor or nurse before taking aspirin or NSAIDs.

Medications are often called by their brand name, which can make it difficult to know their ingredients. To help you identify medications that contain aspirin, other NSAIDs, and vitamin E, please review the list of common medications in this leaflet. While this list includes the most common products, there are others. Please check with your healthcare provider if you aren't sure. Always be sure your doctor knows all the medications you're taking, both prescription and over-the-counter.

The following common medications contain aspirin:

Alka Seltzer®	Cama® Arthritis Pain Reliever	Genprin®	Roxiprin®
Anacin®	COPE®	Gensan®	Saletto®
Arthritis Pain Formula	Dasin®	Heartline®	Salocol®
Arthritis Foundation Pain Reliever®	Easprin®	Headrin®	Sodol®
ASA Enseals®	Ecotrin (most formulations)	Isollyl®	Soma® Compound Tablets
ASA Suppositories®	Empirin® Aspirin (most formulations)	Lanorinal®	Soma Compound with Codeine Tablets
Ascriptin® and Ascriptin A/D	Epromate®	Lortab® ASA Tablets	St. Joseph® Adult Chewable Aspirin
Aspergum®	Equagesic Tablets	Magnaprin®	Supac®
Asprimox®	Equazine®	Marnal®	Synalgos® DC Capsules
Axotal®	Excedrin® Extra- Strength Analgesic Tablets and Caplets	Micrainin®	Tenol-Plus®
Azdone®	Excedrin Migraine	Momentum®	Trigesic®
Bayer® (most formulations)	Fiorgen®	Norgesic Forte® (most formulations)	Talwin® Compound
BC® Powder and Cold Formulations	Fiorinal®	Norwich® Aspirin	Vanquish® Analgesic Caplets
Bufferin®	Fiorinal® (most formulations)	PAC® Analgesic Tablets	Wesprin® Buffered
Bufferin® (most formulations)	Fiortal®	Orphengesic®	Zee-Seltzer®
Buffets II®	Gelpirin®	Painaid®	ZORprin®
Buffex®		Panasal®	
		Percodan® Tablets	
		Persistin®	
		Robaxisal® Tablets	

The following common medications are NSAIDs that do not contain aspirin:

Advil®	Children's Motrin®	Indomethacin	Mobic®	Piroxicam
Advil Migraine	Clinoril®	Indocin®	Motrin	Ponstel®
Aleve®	Daypro®	Ketoprofen	Nabumetone	Relafen®
Anaprox DS®	Diclofenac	Ketorolac	Nalfon®	Saletto 200
Ansaid®	Etodolac®	Lodine®	Naproxen	Sulindac
Arthrotec®	Feldene®	Meclofenamate	Naprosyn®	Toradol®
Bayer Select Pain Relief Formula Caplets	Fenoprofen	Mefenamic Acid	Nuprin®	Voltaren®
Celebrex	Flurbiprofen	Meloxicam	Orudis®	
	Genprin®	Menadol®	Oxaprozin	
	Ibuprofen	Midol®	PediaCare Fever®	

Most multivitamins contain vitamin E, so if you take a multivitamin be sure to check the label. The following products contain vitamin E:

Amino-Opt-E	Aquavit	E-400 IU	E complex-600
Aquasol E	D'alpha E	E-1000 IU Softgels	Vita-Plus E

Acetaminophen (Tylenol®) is generally safe to take during your cancer treatment. It doesn't affect platelets, so it will not increase your chance of bleeding. The following common medications contain acetaminophen; those in bold require a prescription:

Acephen®	Datril®	Norco®	Tylenol with Codeine No. 3
Aceta® with Codeine	Di-Gesic®	Panadol®	Vanquish
Acetaminophen	Esgic®	Percocet®	Vicodin®
with Codeine	Excedrin P.M.	Repan	Wygesic®
Aspirin-Free Anacin	Fiorcet®	Roxicet®	Zydone®
Arthritis Pain Formula	Lorcet®	Talacen®	
Aspirin-Free	Lortab	Tempra®	
Darvocet-N 100®	Naldegesic®	Tylenol	

! Read the labels on all your medications.

Acetaminophen (Tylenol) is a very common ingredient found in over-the-counter and prescription medications. It's often an ingredient in pain relievers, fever reducers, sleep aids, and cough, cold, and allergy medications. The full name acetaminophen is not always written out, so look for these common abbreviations, especially on prescription pain relievers: APAP, AC, Acetaminoph, Acetaminop, Acetamin, and Acetam.

Acetaminophen is safe when used as directed, but there is a limit to how much you can take in 1 day. It's possible to take too much acetaminophen without knowing because it's in many different medications, so always read and follow the label on the product you are taking. Do not take more than 1 medication at a time that contains acetaminophen without talking with a member of your healthcare team.

If you have any questions or concerns, talk with a member of your healthcare team. You can reach them Monday through Friday from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm at _____. After 5:00 pm, during the weekend, and on holidays, please call _____. If there's no number listed, or you're not sure, call (212) 639-2000.

Herbal Remedies and Cancer Treatment

One week before you have surgery or start chemotherapy or radiation therapy, you must stop taking any herbal or botanical home remedies or other dietary supplements because they can:

- Interact with other drugs
- Increase or lower blood pressure
- Thin the blood and increase the risk of bleeding
- Make radiation therapy less effective
- Lower the effects of medications that suppress the immune system
- Increase the effects of sedation or anesthesia

■ Common Herbs and Their Effects

Echinacea

- Can cause an allergic reaction such as a rash or difficulty breathing
- Can lower the effect of drugs used to suppress the immune system

Garlic

- Can lower blood pressure, fat, and cholesterol levels
- Can prevent platelets (the blood cells that help stop bleeding) from sticking together, which increases the risk of bleeding

Ginkgo (also known as ginkgo biloba)

- Can change how platelets function, which can increase the risk of bleeding

Ginseng

- Can act as a stimulant, which can decrease the effects of anesthesia or sedation
- Can interfere with platelet function, which can increase the risk of bleeding
- Can lower blood glucose (sugar) level

Turmeric

- Can reduce the antitumor action of chemotherapy drugs

St. John's Wort

- Can interact with medications given during surgery
- Can make the skin more sensitive to laser treatment

Valerian

- Can have a sedative effect, which can increase the effects of anesthesia or sedation

Herbal formulas

- Many herbal formulas contain different herbs. We don't know their side effects. You must also stop taking these products 1 week before and during treatment

For more information about herbs and botanicals, visit the About Herbs, Botanicals & Other Products website at mskcc.org/aboutherbs.

You can also download the Memorial Sloan Kettering About Herbs app from the Apple App Store at itunes.apple.com/us/app/about-herbs/id554267162?mt=8.

This information does not cover all possible side effects. Please share any questions or concerns with your doctor or nurse.

If you have any questions or concerns, talk with a member of your healthcare team. You can reach them Monday through Friday from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm at _____. After 5:00 pm, during the weekend, and on holidays, please call _____. If there's no number listed, or you're not sure, call (212) 639-2000.

Information for Family and Friends for the Day of Surgery

This information explains what to expect on the day your friend or family member is having surgery at Memorial Sloan Kettering (MSK).

■ Before the Surgery

After arriving at the hospital, the patient will be asked to provide contact information for the person who will be meeting with the surgeon after the surgery. This is the same person who will get updates from the nurse liaison during the surgery. If the patient is having an outpatient procedure, he or she will also be asked to provide contact information for the person who will be taking them home.

Once the patient is checked in, he or she will go to the Presurgical Center (PSC) to be examined before surgery. One person can come along, but other visitors should wait in the waiting area. If the patient wishes, other visitors may join him or her when the nurse has finished the exam.

When the operating room (OR) is ready, the surgical team will take the patient there. They will prepare the patient for surgery, which can take 15 to 90 minutes. Then, the surgery will begin.

Please remember the following:

- Do not bring food or drinks into the waiting area or the PSC. Patients are not allowed to eat before their surgery or procedure.
- Our patients are at high risk for infection. Please do not visit if you have any cold or flu symptoms (fever, sneezing, sniffles, or a cough). We may ask you to wear a mask if there are any concerns about your health.
- If the patient brought any valuables, such as a cell phone, iPod, iPad, etc., please keep them safe for him or her during surgery.
- 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 1st floor. While you are waiting, here are some things you can do:

- Food and drinks are available on the 1st floor in the cafeteria and in the 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 is open Monday through Friday from 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM.
- Wireless Internet access is available in most areas of the hospital. You can also use the computers in

the rooms off the main lobby.

- Please be courteous and mindful of others while using your cell phone. Use the designated area to accept and make calls on your cell phone. It may be useful to bring your phone charger to the hospital.
- The Mary French Rockefeller All Faith Chapel is an interfaith chapel located in room M106 near the main lobby on the 1st floor. It is open at all times for meditation and prayer.
- The Patient Recreation Pavilion is open daily from 9:00 AM to 8:00 PM for patients and their visitors. Children are allowed in the pavilion as long as they are supervised by an adult. Arts and crafts, a library, an outdoor terrace, and scheduled entertainment events are available in this area. To get to the pavilion, take the M elevators to the 15th floor.

Surgery updates

A nurse liaison will keep you updated on the progress of surgery. He or she will:

- Give you information about the patient.
- Prepare you for your meeting with the surgeon.
- Prepare you for visiting the patient in the Post Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU).

To contact the nurse liaison:

- From inside the hospital, use a hospital courtesy phone. Dial 2000 and ask for beeper 9000. Please be patient; this can take up to 2 minutes.
- From outside of the hospital, call 212-639-2000. Ask for beeper 9000.
- You can also ask the information desk staff to contact the nurse liaison for you.

■ After the Surgery

Meeting with the surgeon

When the patient's surgery is completed, we will call you and ask you to return to the concierge desk to tell you where to go to meet with the surgeon.

After you have met with the surgeon, return to the concierge desk and tell them that you have finished your consultation.

Visiting the patient in the PACU

After surgery, the patient will be taken to the PACU. It can take up to 90 minutes before the patient is ready to have visitors. You can use this time to take a walk or just relax in the waiting area until the patient is ready to see you.

When the patient is able to have visitors, a staff member will take you to the PACU. Please remember that only a limited number of visitors can go into the PACU. This is to keep the area quiet and avoid overcrowding. The patients in the PACU need time for rest and nursing care after surgery.

While visiting in the PACU

- Silence your cell phone.

- Apply an alcohol-based hand sanitizer (such as Purell®) before entering. There are hand sanitizer stations located throughout the hospital.
- Speak quietly.
- Respect other patients' privacy by staying at the bedside of your friend or family member.
- Do not bring food or flowers into the PACU.
- If any PACU patient needs special nursing attention, we may ask you to leave or to delay your visit.

After your visit, the nurse will escort you back from the PACU. He or she will update you on the patient's condition. He or she will also explain the plan of care for the patient, such as whether the patient is staying overnight and when he or she will be moved to an inpatient room. If the patient is going home the same day, a responsible adult must take him or her home.

We will give you a card with the PACU phone number. Please appoint one person to call for updates.

If you have any questions or concerns, talk with a member of your healthcare team. You can reach them Monday through Friday from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm at _____. After 5:00 pm, during the weekend, and on holidays, please call _____. If there's no number listed, or you're not sure, call (212) 639-2000.

The information in this section will tell you what to expect after your surgery, both during your hospital stay and after you leave the hospital. You will learn how to safely recover from your surgery. Write down any questions you have and be sure to ask your doctor or nurse.

What to Expect

When you wake up after your surgery, you will be in the Post Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU).

You will receive oxygen through a thin tube that rests below your nose called a nasal cannula. A nurse will be monitoring your body temperature, pulse, blood pressure, and oxygen levels.

You may have a urinary catheter (Foley®) in your bladder to monitor the amount of urine you are making. You will also have compression boots on your lower legs to help your circulation.

You may have a pain pump called a patient-controlled analgesia (PCA) device. For more information, please read *Patient-Controlled Analgesia (PCA)*, in this section. Your pain medication will be given through an IV line.

Your visitors can see you briefly in the PACU, usually within 90 minutes after you arrive there. A member of the nursing staff will explain the guidelines to them.

After your stay in the PACU, you will be taken to your hospital room. Soon after you arrive in your room, you will be helped out of bed and into a chair. Your nurse will tell you how to recover from your surgery. Below are examples of ways you can help yourself recover safely.

- You will be encouraged to walk with the help of your nurse or physical therapist. We will give you medication to relieve pain. Walking helps reduce the risk for blood clots and pneumonia. It also helps to stimulate your bowels so they begin working again.
- Use your incentive spirometer. This will help your lungs expand, which prevents pneumonia. For more information, please read *How to Use Your Incentive Spirometer*, in this section.
- Continue to perform your breathing and coughing exercises every 1 to 2 hours while you are awake. Your nurse will teach you to splint your incision. This will reduce the movement of your stomach muscles and decrease pain while you do the coughing exercises.

Commonly Asked Questions: During Your Hospital Stay

The following section covers common questions patients ask after having gallbladder removal surgery. Speak with your doctor or nurse if you have any additional questions or if any of this information is unclear.

Will I have pain after my surgery?

Yes, you will have pain after your surgery, especially in the first few days. Your doctor and nurse will ask you about your pain often. You will be given medication to manage your pain as needed. If your pain is not relieved, please tell your doctor or nurse. It is important to control your pain so you can cough, breathe deeply, use your incentive spirometer, and get out of bed and walk.

Why is it important to walk?

Walking will help prevent blood clots in your legs. It also decreases your risk of having other complications such as pneumonia.

Will I be able to eat?

Your doctor will let you know when you can start eating and drinking. This will depend on the time of your surgery and how you are feeling after it. Some patients are able to drink small amounts of liquids the evening of the surgery. Most patients are able to start eating the day after the surgery. When you are able to eat, you should start slowly and progress to your regular diet as tolerated.

Eating a balanced diet high in protein will help you heal after surgery. Your diet should include a healthy protein source at each meal, as well as fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. For more tips on increasing the amount of calories and protein in your diet, ask your nurse for the resource *Eating Well During and After Your Cancer Treatment*. If you have questions about your diet, ask to see a dietitian.

How long will I be in the hospital?

If you had a laparoscopic cholecystectomy, you will probably go home within 24 hours. If you had an open cholecystectomy, you will be in the hospital for 2 to 3 days.

Commonly Asked Questions: After You Leave the Hospital

Will I have pain when I am home?

The length of time each patient has pain or discomfort varies. You may still have some pain when you go home and will probably be taking pain medication. Follow the guidelines below.

- Call your doctor if the medication prescribed for you doesn't relieve your pain.
- Take your medications as directed and as needed.
- Do not drive or drink alcohol while you are taking prescription pain medication.
- As your incision heals, you will have less pain and need less pain medication. A mild pain reliever such as acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil) will relieve aches and discomfort. However, large quantities of acetaminophen may be harmful to your liver. Do not take more acetaminophen than the amount directed on the bottle or as instructed by your doctor or nurse.
- Pain medication should help you as you resume your normal activities. Take enough medication to do your exercises comfortably. Pain medication is most effective 30 to 45 minutes after taking it.
- Keep track of when you take your pain medication. Taking it when your pain first begins is more effective than waiting for the pain to get worse.

Can I shower?

Yes, taking a warm shower is relaxing and can help decrease muscle aches. Use soap when you shower and gently wash your incision. Pat the areas dry with a towel after showering, and leave your incision uncovered (unless there is drainage). Call your doctor if you see any redness or drainage from your incision.

Do not take tub baths until you discuss it with your doctor at the first appointment after your surgery.

Is it normal not to feel hungry after surgery?

It is common to have a decreased appetite after surgery. Try eating several smaller meals that have each of the food groups (i.e., fruits/vegetables, meat/chicken/fish, breads/grains, dairy products). This will help you heal faster.

How can I prevent constipation?

Your usual bowel pattern will change after surgery. You may have trouble passing stool (feces). This is a common side effect of pain medication. Please review the material your nurse gave you about fiber and constipation.

To avoid constipation, take a stool softener such as docusate sodium (Colace®) 3 times a day and 2 tablets of senna (a laxative) at bedtime. Continue taking the stool softener and laxative until you are no longer taking pain medication. Drink plenty of liquids. If you feel bloated avoid foods that can cause gas, such as beans, broccoli, onions, cabbage, and cauliflower.

Can I drink alcohol after surgery?

Do not drink alcohol while you are taking pain medications.

How do I care for my incision?

The location of your incision will depend on the type of surgery you had. It is normal to have numbness of the skin below the incision because some of the nerves were cut; this sensation will lessen over time.

- By the time you are ready to leave the hospital, your surgical incision will have begun to heal.
- You and your caregiver should look at your incision with your nurse before you leave the hospital so you know what it looks like.
- If any liquid is draining from your incision, you should write down the amount and color. Call your doctor's office and speak with the nurse about any drainage from your incision.

Change your bandages at least once a day and more often if they become wet with drainage.

When there is no longer any drainage coming from your incision, they can be left uncovered.

If you go home with Steri-Strips on your incision, they will loosen and fall off by themselves. If they haven't fallen off within 10 days, you may remove them.

If you go home with glue over your sutures (stitches), it will also loosen and peel off, similarly to the Steri-Strips.

Is it normal to feel tired after surgery?

Yes, feeling tired (fatigue) is an expected side effect. It usually takes 3 weeks until your energy level returns to normal.

Can I resume my activities?

It is important for you to resume your activities after surgery. Spread them out over the course of the day. You can do light household tasks. Try washing dishes, preparing light meals, and other activities as you are able.

You may return to your usual sexual activity as soon as your incisions are well healed and you can do so without pain or fatigue.

Your body is an excellent guide for telling you when you have done too much. When you increase your activity, monitor your body's reaction. You may find that you have more energy in the morning or the afternoon. Plan your activities for times of the day when you have more energy.

When is it safe for me to drive?

You may resume driving 3 weeks after surgery as long as you are not taking pain medication that may make you drowsy.

When can I return to work?

The time it takes to return to work depends on the type of work you do, the type of surgery you had, and how fast your body heals. Most people are able to return to work 1 to 2 weeks after a laparoscopic cholecystectomy and 3 to 4 weeks after an open cholecystectomy.

What exercises can I do?

Exercise will help you gain strength and feel better. Walking and stair climbing are excellent forms of exercise.

Gradually increase the distance you walk. Climb stairs slowly, resting or stopping as needed. Ask your doctor or nurse before starting more strenuous exercises.

When can I lift heavy objects?

Check with your doctor before you do any heavy lifting. Normally, you should not lift anything heavier than 5 pounds (2.3 kilograms) for at least 6 weeks. Ask your doctor how long you should avoid heavy lifting.

How can I cope with my feelings?

After surgery for a serious illness, you may have new and upsetting feelings. Many patients say they felt weepy, sad, worried, nervous, irritable, and angry at one time or another. You may find that you cannot control some of these feelings. If this happens, it's a good idea to seek emotional support.

The first step in coping is to talk about how you feel. Family and friends can help. Your nurse, doctor, and social worker can reassure, support, and guide you. It is always a good idea to let these professionals know how you, your family, and your friends are feeling emotionally. Many resources are available to patients and their families. Whether you are in the hospital or at home, the nurses, doctors, and social workers are here to help you and your family and friends handle the emotional aspects of your illness.

When is my first appointment after my surgery?

Your first appointment after surgery will be in 1 to 3 weeks after you leave the hospital. Your nurse will give you instructions on how to make this appointment, including the phone number to call. During this appointment, your doctor will discuss the pathology results with you in detail.



Call your doctor if you have:

- A temperature of 101° F (38.3° C) or higher
- Pain that does not get better with your medications
- Redness, swelling, or drainage from your incision that is foul smelling or pus-like
- Any new symptom or physical change
- Any questions or concerns

After 5:00 PM, during the weekend, and on holidays, call 212-639-2000. Ask to speak to the doctor on call for your surgeon.

Notes _____

How to Use Your Incentive Spirometer

This information will help you learn how to use your incentive spirometer.

An incentive spirometer will help you expand your lungs by encouraging you to breathe more deeply and fully. Using your incentive spirometer after your surgery, along with deep breathing and coughing exercises, will help keep your lungs active throughout the recovery process and prevent complications such as pneumonia.

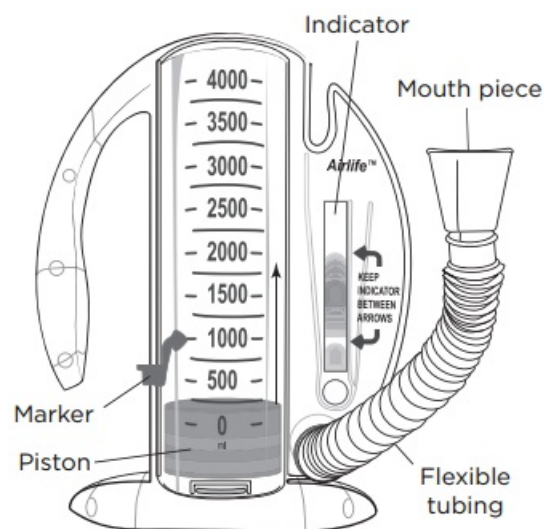
A video demonstrating how to use your incentive spirometer can be found on the Memorial Sloan Kettering (MSK) website at:

www.mskcc.org/videos/how-use-your-incentive-spirometer

The first time you use it, you will need to take the flexible tubing with the mouthpiece out of the bag. Expand the tubing and connect it to the outlet on the right side of the base (see figure). The mouthpiece will be attached to the other end of the tubing.

To use your incentive spirometer:

1. Sit upright in a chair or in bed. Hold the incentive spirometer upright at eye level.
2. Exhale (breathe out) once slowly. Put the mouthpiece in your mouth and close your lips tightly around it.
3. Take a slow, deep breath in through your mouth. As you take a slow, deep breath, you will see the piston rise inside the large column. While the piston rises, the indicator on the right should move upwards. It should stay in between the 2 arrows (see figure). If the indicator does not stay between the arrows, you are breathing either too fast or too slowly.
4. Try to get the piston as high as you can, while keeping the indicator between the arrows.
5. When you get it as high as you can, try to keep it at that level for 2 to 5 seconds or longer, if possible.
6. Exhale slowly, allowing the piston to fall all the way back to the bottom. Rest for a few seconds.
7. Take 10 breaths with your incentive spirometer every hour while you are awake, or as instructed by your clinician. Try to get the piston to the same level with each breath.
8. After each set of breaths, cough 3 times. This will help loosen or clear any secretions in your lungs.



■ Special Points

- If you feel dizzy at any time, stop and rest. Try again at a later time.
- If you had surgery on your chest or abdomen, hug or hold a pillow to help splint your incision. This will help decrease pain at your incision.
- Breathe through your mouth. If you breathe through your nose the incentive spirometer will not work properly. You can plug your nose if you have trouble.
- Keep the incentive spirometer clean by covering the mouthpiece when it is not in use.

If you have any questions or concerns, talk with a member of your healthcare team. You can reach them Monday through Friday from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm at _____. After 5:00 pm, during the weekend, and on holidays, please call _____. If there's no number listed, or you're not sure, call (212) 639-2000.

Patient-Controlled Analgesia (PCA)

This information will help you understand what patient-controlled analgesia (PCA) is and how to use your PCA pump.

Patient-controlled analgesia (PCA) helps you control your pain by administering your pain medication. PCA uses a computerized pump to deliver pain medication into a vein (intravenous, or IV) or epidural space (in your spine). Whether you have an IV PCA or epidural PCA depends on what you and your doctor decided was right for you. When you have pain, you simply press the button attached to the pump. The pump will deliver a safe dose that your doctor has prescribed. Only you should push the PCA button.

Family and friends should never push the button.

■ How Medication is Given with PCA

The pump can be programmed to deliver your medication in 2 ways:

- As needed - You get your pain medication only when you press the button. It will not allow you to get more medication than prescribed. The pump is set to allow only a certain number of doses per hour.
- Continuous - You get your pain medication at a constant rate all the time. This can be combined with the as needed mode. That allows you to take extra doses safely if you are having pain.

■ Possible Side Effects

Pain medication delivered by the PCA pump can have side effects. Tell your doctor or nurse if you have any of these or any other problems:

- Constipation
- Nausea, vomiting
- Dry mouth
- Itching
- Changes in your vision, such as seeing things that are not there
- Drowsiness, dizziness, or confusion
- Weakness, numbness, or tingling in your arms or legs
- Difficulty urinating



■ Special Instructions

PCA is not right for everyone.

- People who are confused or cannot follow these instructions should not use PCA.
- If you have been told you have sleep apnea, tell your doctor. This may affect the way we prescribe your PCA.
- If you have weakness in your hands and may have trouble pushing the PCA button, talk with your doctor or nurse.

When using PCA, tell your doctor or nurse if:

- The medication is not controlling your pain.
- You are having side effects.
- Your pain changes, such as if:
 - It gets worse
 - You feel it in a new place
 - Feels different than before

Your doctor may be able to change the medication to one that may work better for you or give you fewer side effects.

If you have any questions or concerns, talk with a member of your healthcare team. You can reach them Monday through Friday from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm at _____. After 5:00 pm, during the weekend, and on holidays, please call _____. If there's no number listed, or you're not sure, call (212) 639-2000.

Preventing Falls: What You Can Do

This information describes how you can prevent falls while you are in the hospital and at home.

■ Are You at Risk for Falls?

Anyone can fall, but some things make people more likely. Some risk factors for falls include:

- If you have fallen before
- Having a fear of falling
- Feeling weak, tired, or forgetful
- Having numbness or tingling in the legs or feet
- Having difficulty walking, or unsteady walking
- Having poor vision
- Feeling dizzy, lightheaded, or disoriented
- Using a walker or cane
- Having depression or anxiety
- Taking certain medications, such as
 - Laxatives
 - Water pills (diuretics)
 - Sleeping pills
 - Medications to prevent seizures
 - Some antidepressants
 - Pain medications
 - Fluids into a vein (called IV or intravenous fluids)
 - Any medication that makes you feel sleepy

■ How to Prevent Falls While You Are Visiting MSK

- Bring someone with you who can help you get around.
- Ask a member of MSK staff, such as a security guard, for a wheelchair to use while you are at MSK.
- Have someone help you while you're in the dressing room or bathroom. Ask at the reception desk for help if there is no one with you.
- When getting up from a lying position, always sit at the side of the bed or exam table for a few minutes before you stand up.

- If you feel dizzy or weak, let someone know you need help. Many of the bathrooms have call bells that you can use to call for help.

■ How to Prevent Falls While You Are Hospitalized

Even though you may be able to safely walk by yourself at home, in the hospital you may be getting treatment or medication that can affect your ability to safely walk by yourself. That's why we assess patients for their risk of falling throughout their hospitalization. Please follow the tips below to stay safe.

- Before you go to sleep, make sure that your nightlight is on. You can ask your nurse to turn it on, if needed. Keep all of your personal items (e.g., eyeglasses, water, book) within reach.
- If you feel dizzy or weak, call for help before getting out of bed.
- Before you get out of bed, sit at the side of your bed for a few minutes.
- Wear laced or closed-toe shoes or slippers with non-skid soles. Non-skid socks are available to all patients while in the hospital; ask your nurse if you need a pair. Non-skid socks can be purchased at the gift shop.
- Use the grab bars in the bathroom and railings in the hallways.
- Have your nurse take you to the bathroom whenever he or she is in your room and especially before bedtime. This is so you won't have to get up in the middle of the night to use the bathroom.

Patients at higher risk for falling have additional steps to take in order to stay safe while in the hospital. These steps will be explained to you and your caregivers by your nursing staff as part of our Fall Prevention Program, including

- Calling for assistance every time you need to get out of bed.
- Avoid bending over. If you drop something, call for help.
- Avoid leaning on furniture with wheels for support, such as your bedside table, overbed table, and IV pole.
- Calling right away if you see any spills that need to be wiped up. Every time we mop the floor a yellow sign will be posted to tell you that the floor is wet.
- Always wearing your glasses or hearing aid when you're out of bed.
- Making sure we've done all we can to keep you safe, such as
 - Raising your bedrails
 - Keeping a clear path for you to get to the bathroom



CALL! DON'T FALL!
Fall Prevention Program

■ How to Prevent Falls While You Are at Home

- Set up your furniture so that you can walk around without anything blocking your way.
- Use a nightlight or keep a flashlight close to you at night.
- Remove throw rugs or other loose items from your floor. If you have an area rug covering a slippery floor, make sure the rug does not have any loose or fringed edges.
- If your bathroom is not close to your bedroom (or where you spend most of your time during the

day), get a commode. Place it near you so you do not have to walk to the bathroom.

- Install grab bars and handrails next to your toilet and inside your shower. Never use towel racks to pull yourself up because they are not strong enough to hold your weight.
- Apply anti-slip stickers to the floor of your tub or shower.
- Buy a shower chair and a hand-held shower head so you can sit while taking a shower.
- When getting up from a lying position, always sit at the side of the bed or couch for a few minutes before you stand.
- Arrange items in your kitchen and bathroom cabinets at shoulder height so that you don't have to bend too high or low.

If you are concerned about your risk for falling, please speak with your doctor or nurse.

■ **Additional Resource**

For more information about how to prevent falls at home, contact the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for the booklet, *Check for Safety: A Home Fall Prevention Checklist for Older Adults*. Copies are available in English and Spanish at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/publications/toolkit/CheckListForSafety.htm> or by calling 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636).

If you have any questions or concerns, talk with a member of your healthcare team. You can reach them Monday through Friday from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm at _____. After 5:00 pm, during the weekend, and on holidays, please call _____. If there's no number listed, or you're not sure, call (212) 639-2000.

This section contains a list of MSK support services, as well as the resources that were referred to throughout this guide. These resources will help you prepare for your surgery and recover safely. Write down any questions you have and be sure to ask your doctor or nurse.

MSK Resources

Admitting

212-639-5014

Call to discuss private room or luxury suite options. If you want to change your room choice after your presurgical testing visit, call 212-639-7873 or 212-639-7874.

Anesthesia

212-639-6840

Call with questions about anesthesia.

Blood Donor Room

212-639-7643

Call for more information if you are interested in donating blood or platelets.

Bobst International Center

888-675-7722

MSK welcomes patients from around the world. If you are an international patient, call for help.

Chaplaincy Service

212-639-5982

At MSK, our chaplains are available to listen, help support family members, pray, contact community clergy or faith groups, or simply be a comforting companion and a spiritual presence. Anyone can request spiritual support, regardless of formal religious affiliation. The interfaith chapel is located near the main lobby of Memorial Hospital, and is open 24 hours a day. If you have an emergency, please call the hospital operator and ask for the chaplain on call.

Counseling Center

646-888-0200

Many people find counseling helpful. We provide counseling for individuals, couples, families, and groups, as well as medications to help if you feel anxious or depressed.

Integrative Medicine Service

646-888-0800

Integrative Medicine Service offers patients many services to complement traditional medical care, including music therapy, mind/body therapies, dance and movement therapy, yoga, and touch therapy.

Look Good Feel Better Program

800-227-2345

Learn techniques to help you feel better about your appearance by taking a workshop or visiting the program online at www.lookgoodfeelbetter.org.

Patient-to-Patient Support Program

212-639-5007

You may find it comforting to speak with a cancer survivor or caregiver who has been through a similar treatment. Through our Patient-to-Patient Support Program, we are able to offer you a chance to speak with former patients and caregivers.

Patient Financial Services

212-639-8242

Call with any questions about preauthorization from your insurance company. This is also called preapproval. Patient Financial Services can also help you with your billing or other insurance questions.

Patient Representative Office

212-639-7202

Call if you have any questions about the Health Care Proxy form or if you have any concerns about your care.

Perioperative Clinical Nurse Specialist

212-639-5935

Call if you have any questions about MSK releasing any information while you are having surgery.

Private Nursing Options

212-639-6892

Patients may request private nurses or companions. Call for more information.

Resources for Life After Cancer (RLAC) Program

646-888-8106

At MSK, care doesn't end after active treatment. The RLAC Program is for patients and their families who have finished treatment. This program has many services, including seminars, workshops, support groups, counseling on life after treatment, and help with insurance and employment issues.

Social Work

646-888-5271 or 646-888-5203

Social workers help patients, family, and friends deal with issues that are common for cancer patients. They provide individual counseling and support groups throughout the course of treatment, and can help you communicate with children and other family members. Our social workers can also refer you to community agencies and programs, as well as financial resources if you're eligible.

Tobacco Treatment Program

212-610-0507

If you want to quit smoking MSK has specialists who can help. Call for more information.

For additional online information, visit LIBGUIDES on MSK's library website at <http://library.mskcc.org>. You can also contact the library reference staff at 212-639-7439 for help.

External Resources

The following are resources outside of MSK that you may find helpful:

Access-A-Ride

www.mta.info/nyct/paratran/guide.htm

877-337-2017

In New York City, the MTA offers a shared ride, door-to-door service for people with disabilities who are unable to take the public bus or subway.

Air Charity Network

www.aircharitynetwork.org

877-621-7177

Provides travel to treatment centers.

American Cancer Society (ACS)

www.cancer.org

800-227-2345

Offers a variety of information and services, including Hope Lodge, a free place for patients and caregivers to stay during cancer treatment.

Cancer and Careers

www.cancerandcareers.org

A comprehensive resource for education, tools, and events for employees with cancer.

CancerCare

www.cancercares.com

800-813-4673

275 Seventh Avenue (between West 25th & West 26th Streets) New York, NY 10001

Provides counseling, support groups, educational workshops, publications, and financial assistance.

Cancer Support Community

<http://cancersupportcommunity.org>

Provides support and education to people affected by cancer.

Caregiver Action Network

www.caregiveraction.org

800-896-3650

Provides education and support for those who care for loved ones with a chronic illness or disability.

Chronic Disease Fund

www.cdfund.org

877-968-7233

Offers financial assistance to pay for copayments during treatment. Patients must have medical insurance, meet the income criteria, and be prescribed medication that is part of the CDF formulary.

Corporate Angel Network

www.corpangelnetwork.org

866-328-1313

Free travel to treatment across the country using empty seats on corporate jets.

Gilda's Club

www.gildasclubnyc.org

212-647-9700

A place where men, women, and children living with cancer find social and emotional support through networking, workshops, lectures, and social activities.

Healthwell Foundation

www.healthwellfoundation.org

800-675-8416

Provides financial assistance to cover copayments, health care premiums, and deductibles for certain medications and therapies.

Hospital Hosts

www.hospitalhosts.com

National resource to help reduce costs related to medical travel needs such as air, car, and lodging near hospitals.

Joe's House

www.joeshouse.org

877-563-7468

Provides a list of places to stay near treatment centers for people with cancer and their families.

LGBT Cancer Project

<http://lgbtcancer.com>

Provides support and advocacy for the LGBT community, including a online support groups and a database of LGBT friendly clinical trials.

National Cancer Institute

www.cancer.gov

National Cancer Legal Services Network

www.nclsn.org

Free cancer legal advocacy program.

National LGBT Cancer Network

www.cancer-network.org

Provides education, training, and advocacy for LGBT cancer survivors and those at risk.

Needy Meds

www.needymeds.com

Lists Patient Assistance Programs for brand and generic name medications.

NYRx

www.nyrxplan.com

Provides prescription benefits to eligible employees and retirees of public sector employers in New York State.

Partnership for Prescription Assistance

www.pparx.org

888-477-2669

Helps qualifying patients without prescription drug coverage get free or low-cost medications.

Patient Access Network Foundation

www.panfoundation.org

866-316-7263

Provides assistance with copayments for patients with insurance.

Patient Advocate Foundation

www.patientadvocate.org

800-532-5274

Provides access to care, financial assistance, insurance assistance, job retention assistance, and access to the national underinsured resource directory.

RxHope

www.rxhope.com

877-267-0517

Provides assistance to help people obtain medications that they have trouble affording.