

GET GOOD INFO FOR MAKING A DECISION ABOUT SURGERY:

There is no such thing as “routine surgery.” Even the most common operations have risks, and ALL are a risk for infection.

When surgery is recommended, and it’s not urgent, here’s how you, as a Care Partner, can help your loved one increase their chances for the best possible outcome.

Get independent 2nd or 3rd opinions from doctors who don’t know one another. (Some doctors are reluctant to disagree with a doctor who’s a friend.)

Talk to Board Certified doctors known to—

- Take time to listen and respond to patients’ questions and concerns. You may have to “ask around” for suggestions from you friends and family.
- Operate in a highly-rated hospital.

Use these helpful and reliable sources to find hospital ratings:

- Hospital Safety Grade
- Hospital Compare

As always, go to every doctor appointment and take good notes for your loved one.

CARE PARTNER, YOUR HELP IS INVALUABLE!

KNOW THE RISKS:

Explore Options and Possible Alternatives to Surgery

- Try to go to all doctor visits** with your loved one.
- Help your loved one prepare a good list of topics** to cover with every doctor consulted, starting with your loved one’s goals and priorities! Examples to consider:
 - “Wellness wishes”—your loved one’s vision, hopes and priorities for quality of life after surgery (or any alternative treatment that might be offered)
 - Concerns or fears about the recommended surgery
 - The pros and cons of the recommended surgery
- Some questions to consider asking:**
 - Is surgery the only choice?
 - What are some alternatives to surgery?
(For every alternative), what are the results compared to surgery?
 - What if I put off surgery for awhile? (Pros and cons?)
 - What if I decided not to have this surgery at all? (Pros and cons?)
 - What are my costs for surgery (and any alternative treatment options)?
 - What if I can’t afford surgery or other treatments
 - How do I know what my insurance will cover?
 - How much time would I miss from work?
 - Would I need to have help at home during recovery?*
 - What would my medications cost?
 - Would I need physical or occupational therapy? Wound care?
 - What resources are available to help with costs?
- Urge your loved one to ask as many questions**—of as many doctors—as needed in order to feel comfortable making a decision.



Use our Checklist for planning help during your loved one’s recovery.