

Surgical Safety Checklist

Frequently Asked Questions for Patients

Q: What is a Surgical Safety Checklist?

A Surgical Safety Checklist is a series of questions (in the form of a checklist) that the surgical team will go through at three distinct times: before anesthesia, before incision, and before the patient leaves the operating room. In addition to making sure the standard steps are followed, a checklist encourages better communication between the team members, which has been shown to improve patient safety.

Q: Why do I need to know about Surgical Safety Checklists?

A checklist is used to make surgery safer. Knowing about a checklist before your surgery will make you feel more comfortable when the surgical team discusses it in the operating room before you are given the anesthetic. You will know that their goal is to make sure that you are having the right procedure and that everything they need or may need is available.

Q: How do I know if a Surgical Safety Checklist will be used for my surgery?

Simply ask any member of your surgical team if a checklist is used in this hospital and if it will be used in your case. If it hasn't been implemented yet, ask what checks are in place to make your surgery safe.

Q: How can I help the surgical team with a checklist?

As you are prepared for the operating room, staff in different areas will ask you to say your name, date of birth, and allergies, and ask other questions to ensure they have all the correct information to keep you safe. Fully answer the questions and ask for clarification if you don't understand. You will be asked these questions several times to make sure everyone has the necessary information.

Good communication between patients, families and the surgical team is the most important safety step in your care and you have an essential role in it. We encourage you to ask, listen and talk to your surgical team – they will welcome your opinion because their objective is to keep you safe.

Surgical Safety Checklist: Smart for patients. Smart for providers.