

To help you prepare for your surgery, we have compiled suggestions from our FORCE Outreach Coordinators around the country.

We hope this list helps you through this step of your journey and makes your experience a little easier.

PRIOR TO SURGERY

- Have a list of all medications you take or might be allergic to when you go for your pre-operation appointments.
- Rent a few movies and get some books and magazines.
- Make a list of activities you will not be able to do during recovery. When friends and family ask how they can help you, refer to this list. People REALLY want to help after you have had surgery.
- If you have young children, make plans for them to get to and from school. Schedule after school play dates until someone is home to help you. Remember, you will not be able to drive or pick up your children until your doctor approves.
- Prepare your children for the surgery ahead of time so it is not a surprise. Let them know when you'll be home and how much you look forward to playing games, watching movies and reading books with them.
- Obtain a few additional pillows for your bed and one that can be used under the seatbelt for car rides.
- Talk to your doctor before surgery about recommendations for a special bra and if you need a prescription for this. Your insurance company may cover the cost of a bra.
- Make sure that you have a few shirts that button or zip up the front, as well pajamas that button up the front to wear after surgery. Putting clothes over your head will be difficult at first.
- Get your hair cut and/or colored.
- Purchase a spill free cup or water bottle.
- Consider taking pre-op and post-op photos if you wish to record your journey.

SUGGESTED PACKING LIST

- Pajamas with button down top, and loose drawstring bottoms so they are easy to get on and off
- Slippers for trips to the bathroom
- Lightweight robe
- Zip-up sweater or shirt and sweatpants to go home in
- Mastectomy bra or camisole with drain holder
- Magazines
- Toiletries
- Throat lozenges or hard candy (helps with dry or sore throat from anesthesia)
- Chapstick or lip balm



HELPFUL TIPS FOR YOUR HOSPITAL STAY

- Do NOT be shy about letting your nurse know if you need pain medicine or anti-nausea medicine. Your body will heal more quickly if you are comfortable.
- Be certain to do your lung and breathing exercises if recommended by your doctor.
- Get specific instructions on post operative range-of-motion and other exercises—what is recommended, what is allowed and what is not.
- Know and understand your discharge instructions, including wound care routine, restrictions, and medication timing before being discharged. It should be in writing from the nurse or doctor on your discharge sheet.

Follow the doctor's orders!

- Use a pillow under the car safety belt to make your ride home more comfortable.

POST SURGERY

- Put a pad or towel on top of your mattress/sheets in case your drains leak.
- Have hand sanitizer available for those helping to empty your drains.
- Rest in an oversized chair with ottoman or recliner if you have one. You may find it easier to sleep in these options instead of your own bed.
- Use a detachable shower head to make post-op showering easier.
- Look into a drain pouch or find a way to secure your drains when you shower. A canvas belt around the waist is a simple solution. Pin the drains to the belt and your hands will be free. A shoe lace, lanyard, or badge-holder around your neck may also provide a convenient and comfortable option.
- Keep your spill free water bottle by your bed and drink plenty of liquids to help healing and prevent urinary tract infections.
- Keep a pad of paper and pen near your bed to keep track of when you take your medication and drain output.
- Be sure to follow your doctor's orders on physical activity.
- Talk to your doctor about a stool softener if needed.
- Contact your local FORCE group, visit the FORCE online message board or call our helpline at 1-866-288-RISK (7475) for support.
- Remember that you are EMPOWERED and brave for taking this step!



Fighting Hereditary Breast and Ovarian Cancer

info@facingourrisk.org www.facingourrisk.org

Toll-free Helpline 866-288-RISK (7475)