

Johns Hopkins Spine Surgery

Patient Guidelines

The prospect of requiring spine surgery can cause considerable anxiety. The Orthopaedic Spine Surgeons at Johns Hopkins have had years of experience performing each procedure that they offer to patients. That fact, along with knowing what to expect on the day of surgery, can make the experience much easier.

Surgery at Johns Hopkins requires that a number of steps be completed to ensure that everything runs smoothly.

Preparing for Surgery

Once your surgery is scheduled, you will be asked to visit your medical doctor or the Johns Hopkins Preoperative Evaluation Center for a physical examination, medical history and other testing. The tests that are needed vary from person to person, but may include blood tests or an EKG. If you have heart disease, diabetes or any other diseases and are being followed by a specialist, you will need to receive written clearance from them prior to surgery. You will also be asked to discontinue certain over-the-counter and prescription medication prior to surgery.

Be sure to make arrangements to have someone drop you off at the hospital on the morning of surgery and pick you up on the day you are discharged from the hospital.

Remember not to eat or drink anything after midnight before the day of surgery to prevent cancellation of the procedure.

The Day of Surgery:

In general, patients having spine surgery will need to report two hours before the scheduled time on the date of surgery to the Pre-Op area. At the East Baltimore location this is located in the Osler Building on the Seventh floor at Johns Hopkins ([click here for directions](#)).

Be sure to bring your MRI and x-rays to your surgery if you have not given them to your surgeon already.

The Surgery:

The surgery itself consists of several steps. Please feel free to ask questions at any time to any member of our team.

Pre-op Evaluation by the Spine Team

The nursing staff in the pre-op area for spine surgery will take your vital signs: blood pressure, pulse etc., and will ask you a few questions. A healthcare provider from the spine team will then greet you and perform a brief exam and complete the surgical consent forms, if they haven't done this already during a clinic visit. This is a great opportunity for you to ask any questions that you might have about the surgery.

Pre-op Evaluation by the Anesthesia Team

A member of the anesthesia team will then ask you a few questions. This is a good time to ask about the pain medications that will be used during the surgery. He or she will then take you to the operating room.

Welcome to the Operating Room

Upon entering the operating room, you will be greeted by the surgical nursing staff. They will help make you comfortable in every way possible.

The Surgery Procedure

The surgery will then be performed. The doctors, nurses, and surgery staff will keep any friends or relatives updated as to how things are going.

Recovery Room

After surgery is completed, you will be taken to the recovery room. The anesthesia team will get you settled in the recovery room at which time your family will be allowed in. Later you will be taken from the recovery room to the surgical intensive care unit (SICU) or to the 8th floor in the Nelson building at the Johns Hopkins orthopaedic unit.

Post-operative Care

The time you will need to stay in the hospital and the kind of post-operative care you will receive varies for each type of surgery. Your doctor can inform you as to what to expect. There is a whole team of nurses and doctors who will give you the care that is needed until you are ready to go home.

Follow-up Care

It is important to make follow-up appointments as instructed by your doctor. This generally involves a visit 6 weeks after your surgery. Follow-up after that as instructed by your doctor. The number to make an appointment is 410-955-6930.