



The Hand & Upper Extremity
CENTER OF GEORGIA, P. C.
SURGERY OF THE HAND, ELBOW AND SHOULDER

BEFORE YOUR SURGERY – Frequently Asked Questions

After you and your doctor have decided to schedule a surgical procedure, many questions will arise prior to the date of surgery. This can be a challenging time as you consider the impact of surgery on your health, your family, recreation activities and your work status. We hope that the answers to your questions can be found below and encourage you to contact our office at (404) 255-0226 if we can be of further assistance.

QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE PRIOR TO SURGERY

Do I have to contact my insurance company?

Our office and the surgical facility will each verify benefits and pre-certify your procedure with your insurer. However, it is your job to fully understand your insurance benefits prior to your procedure. If you have MEDICARE, please ensure that you are currently enrolled at the time of your surgery.

What are my financial obligations?

Your insurance plan contract will dictate your personal financial responsibility. Our office may be able to estimate your expected out-of-pocket expenses based upon your insurance contract and the procedure(s) expected to be performed. If you are unsure of the specifics of your plan, please contact your insurance company so that you can fully understand your coverage.

What if I need to reschedule?

Please notify our office immediately should you need to reschedule your surgery. Your physician has set aside dedicated time in his schedule for your surgery, and should you need to reschedule, please allow him to possibly serve another patient who is in need of his surgical expertise. Should you have experienced any change in your health status since your last visit, please contact us as soon as possible. Surgery may need to be rescheduled in the event of illness. Please understand that we will make an effort to accommodate your requested time to reschedule, provided your surgeon's schedule allows.

What are the options for anesthesia during the procedure?

On the day of surgery you will consult with an anesthesiologist regarding the plan of care for your surgery. There **may** be options for the choice of anesthesia based upon the scheduled procedure and the preferences of both you and your surgeon. Below is an explanation of some of the anesthesia methods that may be offered. Please understand that all pediatric procedures are done under general anesthesia, with a parent frequently allowed to be present until anesthesia is administered.

- General Anesthesia-this method involves the administration of Intravenous (IV) Sedation followed by inhaled gases to keep you “asleep” and resting comfortably.
- Regional anesthesia- “blocks” of large nerves can be used to make larger areas such as the hand or whole arm insensitive to pain. Light sedation medications are typically used during surgery to allow you to feel at ease.
- Local Anesthesia- some surgeries can be performed using administration of local anesthetics to “numb” the surgical site. At times, additional IV or inhaled sedation is used.



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Can I eat and drink before the procedure?

No. You will be asked to avoid eating and drinking anything AFTER MIDNIGHT prior to your surgery.

Children scheduled for surgery may have clear liquids including water, apple juice or sports drink (NOT RED OR PURPLE IN COLOR) up to four hours before your scheduled *arrival time*. Please view the **Pediatric Fasting Guidelines for Children** for more information.

Failure to follow the above guidelines will result in either postponement or cancellation of your surgery. *Anesthesia cannot be administered on patients who have food or drink in their stomach.*

Can I take my medicines before surgery?

Prior to surgery you will be contacted by a nurse or representative of the surgical facility to review your medications and inform you of which ones are safe to take prior to your procedure.

Please check with your surgeon if you or your primary care physician have questions regarding their recommendation.

What should I wear on the day of the procedure?

Wear casual, loose fitting clothing on the day of your procedure. Avoid zippers and buttons which may be difficult to fasten without full use of your arm or hand. Leave jewelry and valuables at home. Contact lenses or dentures cannot be worn during surgery. Be sure to bring a container to keep these items protected while you are in surgery.

What time do I need to arrive?

You will be asked to arrive two hours before your scheduled surgery in most cases. Unless you are specifically told otherwise in your pre-operative consultation, please plan accordingly.

What should I bring with me on the day of the procedure?

- Proof of insurance
- Payment that you are responsible for on the day of surgery
- Dentures and contact lenses may not be worn during surgery. Please bring a container in which to store these items.
- Copies of x-rays or other diagnostic tests that your surgeon may wish to review

How long will the procedure last?

The length of surgical procedures is variable based upon the plan of care. Understand that the actual surgical time will be far less than the time spent at the facility which will include pre-operative assessment, anesthesia administration and recovery.

Will the doctor I saw in the office be the one performing the surgery?

Yes, the *Hand & Upper Extremity Center* doctor you met with in the office will perform your surgery. Resident physicians or professional surgical assistants may assist the surgeon who will be present for the entire procedure.



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When will I be able to leave?

At the completion of the procedure, you will be taken to the recovery area where nursing staff will monitor your progress in recovery. Patients having had local anesthesia only will be able to depart promptly. The general requirements for discharge from the facility include being comfortable, being able to eat and drink, and having an accompanying adult person to drive you. In the event that your progress is delayed or there is concern for your medical safety, inpatient admission may be considered.

Will I be able to drive home?

If you have received general anesthesia you will not be allowed to leave on your own. You must have a ride home. Your plan for discharge will be reviewed by the staff upon your arrival and if there is not an adult person able to accompany you after discharge, your surgery may be cancelled. Only those patients whose procedures involve local anesthesia **WIT HOUT ANY FORM OF SEDATION** will be allowed to drive themselves home.

Will I need pain medicine after the procedure?

Your doctor will provide prescriptions for you for pain medication to be taken at home. The medication and quantity is based upon your surgeon's preference based on the degree of discomfort typically associated with a procedure. Inquiries regarding refills should be directed to your surgeon's office during business hours. Refills and replacements of medication will **NOT** be authorized by the on call physician.

Will I need antibiotics after surgery?

Antibiotics are frequently dosed at the time of surgery and may be continued following a procedure at the discretion of your surgeon.

Will I need physical or occupational therapy after surgery?

Post-surgical rehabilitation is a vital portion of your recovery. At times, you will be directed by your surgeon to perform exercises or rehab techniques on your own at home. The outcomes of many procedures are improved upon significantly by the involvement of a skilled hand or physical therapist. The choice of rehabilitation providers will be dictated not only by your convenience, your insurance provider, and type of surgery performed, but also the therapist's experience and area of expertise. *The Hand & Upper Extremity Rehabilitation Centers* work directly with our doctors to ensure continuity of care and to provide the highest level of therapy to our patients. *Rehabilitation Centers* are conveniently located in both our Northside and Alpharetta offices, but there are many therapy options available to you elsewhere.



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Below are the website links for the facilities where our surgeons will be caring for you. Please refer to these sites for directions and information to assist you.

The Hand and Upper Extremity Surgery Center
<http://www.handcenterga.com/surgery.html>

The Atlanta Outpatient Surgery Center
<http://www.atlantaoutpatientsurgerycenter.com>

Northside Hospital- Atlanta Campus
<http://www.northside.com/locations/atlanta.aspx>

Northside Hospital Outpatient Center at Meridian Mark
<http://www.northside.com/locations/meridian.aspx>

Northside Hospital Doctors Centre
http://www.northside.com/locations/doctors_centre.aspx

St. Joseph's Hospital
<http://www.stjosephsatlanta.org/index.html>

Children's Healthcare of Atlanta at Scottish Rite
<http://www.choa.org/default.aspx?id=40>

Children's Healthcare Outpatient Surgery Center at Meridian Mark
<http://www.choa.org/default.aspx?id=5246>

The Shepherd Center
<http://www.shepherd.org/>