

Medication and Surgery

Before Your Operation



AMERICAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS

Inspiring Quality:
Highest Standards, Better Outcomes

100+ years

Your medications may have to be adjusted before your surgery.¹ It is important to fully inform your surgical team about all of the medications you are taking before your surgery, including prescriptions, vitamins, minerals, herbs, drugs, or any other supplements. Even though you are not eating, you may be able to take your routine morning medications with a small sip of water.

Medications to discuss with your doctor:

- Blood thinning medications
- Diabetes (blood sugar) medications
- Pain, anxiety, and depression medications
- Nicotine, alcohol, marijuana, or other cannabidiol (CBD) products



Anticlotting (Blood Thinning) Medications

- **Antiplatelet medications:** Help to prevent blood cells called platelets from clumping together to form a clot. **Examples:** aspirin (ASA), enteric-coated aspirin (Ecotrin®), clopidogrel (Plavix®)
- **Anticoagulant medications:** Thin your blood to slow down the process of clotting. **Examples:** warfarin (Coumadin®), heparin, apixaban (Eliquis®), rivaroxaban (Xarelto®)
- **Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs):** Reduce inflammation, pain, and fever. **Examples:** aspirin (ASA); celecoxib (Celebrex®); diclofenac (Voltaren-XR®) ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®), naproxen (Aleve®)
- **Herbs:** Plants used for medicinal purposes. **Examples:** Natural ginkgo biloba, vitamin E, feverfew, garlic, ginger, ginseng, omega-3 fatty acids, fish oil, St. John's wort, turmeric

Ask Your Doctor

- **What is my risk of a blood clot and does my medication have to be stopped or changed before surgery?** Your risk for a clot is higher if you have surgery within 3 months of a recent clot and if you are having a long or complex surgery.
- **What is my risk of bleeding?** Dental, skin, and low-risk procedures likely will not require you to stop taking your medications.
- **Do I have to stop taking my herbal medication?** Some supplements can affect blood clotting, increase your risks for internal bleeding, or interact with other drugs you are taking.²

Other Medications

Medications	Examples	Notes
Diabetes (blood sugar)	Insulin, metformin, dulaglutide (Trulicity®), empagliflozin (Jardiance®), pioglitazone (Actos®), insulin glargine (Lantus®)	Since you will not be eating before surgery, most diabetic medication is usually adjusted—pioglitazone may not be stopped before surgery and Lantus will be reduced by 50%.
Pain, anxiety, depression, or sleep	Hydrocodone (Vicodin®), tramadol (Ultram®), oxycodone with acetaminophen (Percocet®), pregabalin (Lyrica®), diazepam (Valium®)	These can affect your pain control plan and side effects from opioid use. ³ Go to facs.org/safepaincontrol for more information.
Nicotine, alcohol, marijuana or cannabidiol (CBD) products (used for medicinal or recreational use)	Smoking, vaping, patch, oral	Use of any of these products may affect your heart rate, blood pressure, and pain control during and after your procedure. ⁴⁻⁶ Go to facs.org/quitsmoking to help you quit smoking before your surgery.

Medication List

Name _____

Surgeon Name _____

Primary Doctor Name _____

P A T I E N T — P L E A S E C O M P L E T E

Allergy	Reaction

I have no allergies.

Drug or Supplement	Dose	Route	Need to STOP _____ Days before Surgery	Continue Taking after Surgery? Yes or No	New Dose (if changed)

I take no medications, vitamins, or herbal supplements.

H E A L T H C A R E P R O V I D E R S — P L E A S E C O M P L E T E

AFTER YOUR OPERATION: At discharge, you will be given a list or instructions about restarting your previous medications. You will be given prescriptions for any new medication.

Doctor Notes

This information is published to educate you about preparing for your surgical procedures. It is not intended to take the place of a discussion with a qualified surgeon who is familiar with your situation. It is important to remember that each individual is different, and the reasons and outcomes of any operation depend upon the patient's individual condition.

The American College of Surgeons is a scientific and educational organization that is dedicated to the ethical and competent practice of surgery; it was founded to raise the standards of surgical practice and to improve the quality of care for the surgical patient. The ACS has endeavored to present information for prospective surgical patients based on current scientific information; there is no warranty on the timeliness, accuracy, or usefulness of this content.

Revised May 2019