

# Waiting for Surgery

*Patient Information*  
www.interiorhealth.ca

You have talked to your surgeon and have decided that you are ready, willing and able to have surgery. You might be wondering, "What now and what happens next?" This information sheet shows what you can expect while waiting for your surgery.

## **What Is An Elective Surgery Waitlist?**

If your doctor feels that you need surgery, but it is not an emergency, you will then be put on a surgery waiting list. This is known as an elective surgery waiting list. Your doctor will note how urgently your surgery is required on the booking form.

## **What Happens Now?**

Your name will be added to your hospital's waitlist. You may be asked to have several additional health appointments and medical tests prior to your surgery. You will be contacted by either your surgeons' office or your hospital booking office when a surgery date becomes available. While you are waiting,

it is normal for the surgeon's office, a surgery booking office, or Interior Health Authority to call you and ask about your availability, your health, and if you are still interested in having surgery.

## **What Are Your Responsibilities While You Wait?**

While you are waiting for your surgery to be booked, you need to contact your surgeon and the booking office:

- **If you decide that you no longer want surgery or are no longer ready willing and able to have your surgery.**
- **If your health changes.** If you become injured, ill, pregnant or have another change in health, then you should contact these offices.
- **If you are not able to accept a surgery date during a certain period of time.** While waiting, you may be unavailable for surgery for at most, a total of six months for reasons such as work, vacation, or school or other personal reasons. If you are

unavailable for longer than a total of six months, your surgeon will be contacted and you will be removed from the waitlist.

- **If you have a change in address or phone number, or if you move away to another city, province, or country.** If you remain unable to be contacted after three phone attempts, a phone message, and a mailed letter, then you will be removed from the waitlist.
- **If you must change the date of your surgery.** If you turn down or cancel your surgery date more than three times or do not show up to your surgery, then you could be removed from the surgery waiting list.
- **If you decide to have your surgery with different surgeons, then you must let your previous surgeon know.** You cannot be on more than one waitlist for the same surgery.

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**Interior Health**  
*Every person matters*

**Healthlink BC**

Dial 8-1-1

Hearing Impaired Dial 7-1-1

Talk to a Nurse 24 hours/day, 7 days/week

Pharmacist available between 5 p.m. - 9 a.m. daily

Dietitian between 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. - Monday to Friday

www.healthlinkbc.ca

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### **What Else Should You Do While Waiting?**

**It is important that you can be reached by phone.** This will allow us to confirm your surgery date with you once it has been booked. This also allows us to contact you to verify your interest and ability to have a surgery.

**If you smoke, now is the perfect time to stop.** Many studies have shown that individuals who are not smoking recover better after surgery. Quitting smoking in the weeks and months before surgery will improve general health, your body's ability to heal and your risk of other problems like lung infections.

**Understand your medications.** There may be changes in the normal medicines, vitamins and supplements that you take in the time leading up to your surgery. Talk to your doctor if you have any questions related to your medications.

**You might want to learn more about your surgery or what to expect after surgery.** If you are interested in learning more about your

surgery and recovering from your surgery, you can do so at the following websites:

- **www.interiorhealth.ca/surgery** Review resources and information about wait-times for surgeries in Interior Health and preparing for and recovering from surgery.
- **www.healthlinkbc.ca** Search the **name of your surgery** or **"Surgery: What to Expect"** in order to learn more about what to expect before, during and after surgery.
- You can call 8-1-1 and talk to a health care professional. 8-1-1 is a free-of-charge health information and advice phone line available in British Columbia.

### **Why Are You Waiting?**

The length of time you wait for surgery is affected by a number of factors including:

- How urgent your needs are compared to other patients that are waiting.
- The type of surgery that you will be receiving.
- The hospital where you will receive your surgery.

- The current waitlist of your surgeon.
- Your availability.
- Changing health needs of your community and seasonal factors.

It is difficult to predict exactly how long you will be waiting. However, if you have access to the internet, you can learn more about typical wait times for your surgery at:

**<https://swt.hlth.gov.bc.ca>**

If you are concerned about the length of your wait time, speak with your family doctor who may refer you to another surgeon with shorter wait times. If you still feel your concern has not been addressed, you can contact the IH Patient Care Quality Office directly.

Phone: 250-870-4669

Toll Free: 1-877-IHA-2001

(1-877-442-2001)