

10 Questions to Ask Before Having an Operation

1. Why do I need this operation?
2. How will the operation be performed?
3. Are there other treatment options, and is this operation the best option for me?
4. What are the risks, benefits, and possible complications for this operation? Will my health history and the medications I am currently taking mean the risks, possible complications, and benefits will be different for me?
5. What are my anesthesia options?
 - a. What kind of anesthesia is best for me considering my health history, the prescription medications, and vitamins/herbs I take?
 - b. How will I be monitored during the operation?
6. What can I expect before the operation?
 - a. Will I need any special preparation – tests, blood donation, blood thinners, change in my routine medications?
 - b. Will I need any special diet?
 - c. When do I have to stop eating and drinking?
 - d. Should I take my home medication on the day of my operation?
7. What can I expect for my recovery in terms of treatment, medication, diet, and home care?
 - a. What type of care will I have to provide for myself at home?
 - b. When will I be able to return to my regular activities (work, lifting, driving, and exercise)?
 - c. Will I need any medication—antibiotics, pain medication?
 - d. What can I do to help with my recovery?
8. Could you tell me about your experience with this operation?
 - a. Do you perform this operation regularly?
 - b. What is your success rate, and how often do your patients experience any problems?
 - c. Are you board certified?
 - d. Are you a member of the American College of Surgeons?
 - e. How can I contact you if I have more questions?
9. Is the surgical facility accredited and properly staffed?
10. How much will the operation cost me, and what type of insurance do you take?

Sources for Patient Questions

Russell, TR. *I Need and Operation. . . Now What?* American College of Surgeons. Chicago, IL. 2008

When planning for an Operation. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality www.ahrq.gov/consumer/quicktips/tipsurgery.htm