

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

We understand that preparing for surgery can bring many questions. Below are answers to some of the questions we hear most often. If you don't find the information you're looking for, please contact our office. We're happy to help.

Before Your Surgery

When will I receive my arrival time?

A member of our staff will contact you 1 business day before your procedure with your arrival time and pre-operative instructions. Please note that your arrival time may change due to schedule adjustments or cancellations.

You may request an estimated time of arrival prior to this time frame but please note that it is only an estimate and is subject to change.

If your surgeon's office has provided a different arrival time, please follow the arrival time given by Lake Ridge Ambulatory Surgery Center. The time provided by your surgeon's office is an estimate and may change based on the final surgical schedule. The arrival time communicated by our scheduling staff is the most current and accurate.

Why do I have to arrive so early?

We typically have you arrive 1-2 hours prior to your scheduled surgery time. Your arrival time allows our team to complete your registration, medical assessment, anesthesia evaluation, consent forms, IV placement, and any additional preparations needed before surgery.

What if I become sick before my surgery?

If you develop a fever, cold, flu symptoms, vomiting, diarrhea, COVID-19 symptoms, or any other illness before your procedure, please contact us as soon as possible.

What if I am pregnant or think I might be pregnant?

Please notify your surgeon and our staff immediately. Female patients of childbearing age may be asked to provide a urine sample for pregnancy testing before surgery.

Can I wear makeup, lotion, or perfume?

No. Please arrive with clean skin and avoid wearing makeup, lotions, creams, oils, perfumes, deodorant, nail polish (unless otherwise instructed).

Can I brush my teeth before surgery?

Yes. You may brush your teeth, but do not swallow any water or mouthwash.

Should I shave the surgical area?

No. Please do not shave the surgical site before your procedure, as this may increase the risk of infection. If the area needs to be shaved, we will shave the area for you in the OR.

What if I arrive late?

Please arrive at your scheduled arrival time. Arriving late may delay your procedure or, in some cases, require it to be rescheduled to ensure all necessary pre-operative preparations can be completed safely.

Food & Medications

Why can't I eat or drink before surgery?

When you receive anesthesia or sedation, the normal reflexes that protect your airway are temporarily reduced or absent. If food, liquids, gum, mints, or even small amounts of water remain in your stomach, there is a risk that the stomach contents can travel back up into your throat and enter your lungs during anesthesia. This is called aspiration.

Aspiration can lead to serious complications, including: Choking, Pneumonia, Lung damage, Respiratory failure, The need for emergency treatment or hospitalization

In rare cases, aspiration can be life-threatening or result in death.

For your safety, it is extremely important to follow all fasting (NPO) instructions provided by your surgeon, anesthesia provider, or our nursing staff. Do not eat or drink anything after the time you have been instructed, including water, coffee, gum, mints, candy, or chewing tobacco, unless you have been specifically told that you may take certain medications with a small sip of water.

If you accidentally eat or drink after your instructed fasting time, please notify us immediately. Do not withhold this information to ensure your safety.

Which medications should I take the morning of surgery?

Take only the medications that your surgeon, anesthesia provider, pre-operative nurse instructs you to take.

Should I stop taking blood thinners?

Only if instructed by your prescribing physician or surgeon.

What if I forgot to stop taking a medication?

Inform your nurse, surgeon, or anesthesia provider as soon as possible. Do not stop or restart medications without medical guidance. Depending on the medication, your procedure may proceed as planned or may need to be postponed.

Day of Surgery

What should I bring with me?

Bring your photo ID, insurance card, payment for any required payments, any requested paperwork, and a case for your glasses, dentures, hearing aids, or contact lenses.

Can I bring valuables?

We recommend leaving all valuables at home. Lake Ridge Ambulatory Surgery Center is not responsible for lost or stolen personal belongings.

Can my family stay with me?

Yes. Family members or a designated support person may accompany you during portions of your visit when appropriate. However, to protect patient privacy, maintain a safe environment, comply with facility policies, and support infection prevention measures, access to certain clinical areas may be limited or restricted. Our staff will let your family member know when they may accompany you and will keep them informed throughout your visit.

How long will I be at the surgery center?

Although your procedure may only take a short time, plan to be at the surgery center for several hours to allow time for registration, preparation, surgery, and recovery.

- Arrival: 1–2 hours before your scheduled procedure.
- Procedure: Typically 15 minutes to 2 hours, depending on the type of surgery.

Recovery (PACU):

- Most procedures: 30–45 minutes
- ENT procedures: 10–20 minutes
- Knee, hip, shoulder replacement, and ACDF procedures: 2–3 hours
- Procedures performed under local anesthesia only: 5–10 minutes

Your total length of stay will vary based on your procedure, anesthesia, and individual recovery.

Why do I have to wait if I arrived on time?

While we make every effort to keep your procedure on schedule, surgery schedules can change unexpectedly. Delays may occur due to emergencies, procedures that take longer than anticipated, changes in a patient's medical condition, or additional care that another patient may require before, during, or after surgery.

Because every patient receives individualized care, it is difficult to predict exactly how long a procedure or recovery will take. Our priority is to provide each patient with the time, attention, and care they need without compromising safety.

We understand that delays can be frustrating and appreciate your patience and understanding. Our staff will keep you informed of any significant schedule changes and provide updates throughout your visit whenever possible.

Can I keep my wedding ring on?

We recommend removing all jewelry before arriving for your procedure. If you are unable to remove your wedding ring or other jewelry, please let your nurse know. You may be asked to sign a jewelry waiver acknowledging the associated risks. Silicone or plastic ring substitutes are encouraged whenever possible.

Can I wear my CPAP machine if I have sleep apnea?

If you have sleep apnea, please inform your surgeon and anesthesia provider before your procedure. Please do not bring your personal CPAP or BiPAP machine to the surgery center unless specifically instructed by your surgeon or anesthesiologist.

Lake Ridge Ambulatory Surgery Center does not use patients' personal CPAP or BiPAP machines. To ensure patient safety, maintain infection prevention standards, and provide consistent, standardized care, our clinical team utilizes facility-approved equipment when respiratory support is needed.

If your sleep apnea requires special considerations, your anesthesia provider will review your medical history and develop an appropriate anesthesia plan before your procedure.

Why do I have to verify my name and procedure so many times?

You will be asked several times to confirm your name, date of birth, surgeon, procedure, and surgical site. Although this may seem repetitive, each department involved in your care including: registration, nursing, anesthesia, and the operating room team. Each team will independently verify this information as part of our patient safety process.

Why do I have to remove my dentures, hearing aids, or contact lenses?

These items may need to be removed before surgery to help protect your airway, prevent injury, and reduce the risk of damage or loss during your procedure. Please bring a protective case or storage container for these items.

Why do I need a pregnancy test?

For your safety, female patients of childbearing age may be asked to provide a urine sample for a pregnancy test before surgery. If you choose not to have the test, you will be asked to sign a pregnancy test waiver.

Anesthesia

Will I meet my anesthesia provider before surgery?

Yes. Your anesthesiologist will meet with you before your procedure to review your medical history, discuss your anesthesia plan, and answer your questions.

Why do I need someone to drive me home?

Anesthesia can affect your judgment, coordination, and reaction time for up to 24 hours. For your safety, you must have a responsible adult drive you home.

Can I use Uber or Lyft after surgery?

For your safety, you may not be discharged alone in a rideshare service, taxi, or on public transportation after receiving anesthesia or sedation. A rideshare service may only be used if a responsible adult (18 years of age or older) is present at the surgery center, accompanies you in the vehicle, and remains responsible for your care after discharge.

Recovery & Going Home

How long will I stay in the recovery room?

Your recovery time will depend on the type of procedure and anesthesia you receive.

- Most procedures: 30–45 minutes
- ENT procedures: 10–20 minutes
- Knee, hip, shoulder replacement, and ACDF procedures: 2–3 hours
- Procedures performed under local anesthesia only: 5–10 minutes

Our priority is to closely monitor your recovery, manage your pain and any side effects, ensure you meet all discharge criteria and are medically stable before returning home safely

Will I have pain after surgery?

Pain and discomfort is expected after surgery. While we may not be able to eliminate all pain, our goal is to manage your pain effectively and keep you as comfortable as medically possible.

When can I return to work?

This depends on your procedure and your surgeon's recommendations. Be sure to discuss your expected recovery time before leaving the surgery center.

When can I drive again?

Do not drive for at least 24 hours after receiving anesthesia or sedation, and only when your surgeon has determined it is safe for you to do so.

Can I bring my own walker, sling, brace, or other medical equipment?

Yes. If your surgeon has instructed you to use a walker, sling, brace, crutches, or other medical equipment after surgery, please bring it with you unless instructed otherwise. Our staff will ensure it is available when you are ready for discharge.

Billing & Insurance

Will I receive more than one bill?

Yes. Depending on the services you receive, you may receive separate bills from:

- Lake Ridge Ambulatory Surgery Center
- Your surgeon
- Capitol Anesthesia Associates

When is my payment due?

Any known patient responsibility, such as a copay, coinsurance, deductible, or outstanding balance, is due at check-in.

General Questions

What if I need to cancel or reschedule my surgery?

Please contact your surgeon's office as soon as possible. They will notify the surgery center and assist you with rescheduling if necessary.

What if I require an interpreter?

You have the right to receive language assistance services, including qualified interpreters, at no cost to you, so you can fully understand your care and participate in healthcare decisions.

If you need language assistance, please let us know as soon as possible before your procedure. We will gladly arrange for a qualified medical interpreter at no cost to you.

If you prefer to have a family member or friend assist with interpreting confidential, medical, or financial information, please make arrangements for them to accompany you on the day of your surgery. Please note that professional interpreter services remain available to help ensure clear communication and the highest quality of care.

Who should I call if I have questions after surgery?

If you have questions about your recovery, medications, or surgical site, please contact your surgeon's office. If you experience a medical emergency, call **911** or go to the nearest emergency department immediately.