

# Information for Patients and Families



University of Colorado Hospital  
Anschutz Medical Campus  
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO HEALTH

## Surgery Instructions For Patient and Family or Friend

You, your friend, or relative is scheduled to have surgery at University of Colorado Hospital. The surgery will be at either the Anschutz Inpatient Pavilion or the Anschutz Outpatient Pavilion (Day Surgery) on the Anschutz Medical Campus (formerly Fitzsimons). You will receive instructions with address and phone number to the appropriate facility and how to contact the Surgery Check-In area for your arrival time.

The scheduled time for surgery is approximate. Operating rooms are scheduled for as long as a surgery is expected to take. Sometimes, however, a surgery may take much less or much more time than expected, which affects the other surgeries scheduled for that day. Patients may expect to wait for a period of time. Patients may wish to bring reading or hobby/craft materials. After surgery and recovery, the patient will either be admitted to the hospital or sent home the same day.

Please remember that University of Colorado Hospital cares for many emergency and trauma patients. These patients sometimes require immediate surgery. This can cause delays and interruptions in the schedule of the operating rooms. Every effort will be made to keep the delays short and to keep the patient comfortable.

The patient should not bring any valuables to the hospital, other than what is needed to pay the co-pay. Do not bring jewelry, expensive clothing, etc. If the patient must bring an item of value, try to leave it with a family member or friend. If need be, it will be locked in a safe.

\* Smoking is not allowed indoors. Patients and visitors must go to a designated smoking area outside of the building to smoke. Staff members will be able to direct smokers to an appropriate area.

After surgery, patients go to the Post Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU). The amount of time in this unit varies, but averages 1 – 1 ½ hours. Some reasons a patient may stay in the PACU longer include:

- Type of operation and length of surgery.
- Type of anesthesia used.
- Patient's need for medication in the PACU.
- Patient's rate of "waking up" from the anesthesia.
- Availability of beds on the unit where the patient will be admitted.

Visitors are not allowed in the operating rooms or PACU. An exception is made for patients under the age of 15 who may have one parent or guardian in the PACU.

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After surgery, the physicians will look for family or friends in the family waiting area. If the family/friends wait in a different area, make sure the clerk or volunteer knows. Limit friends or family to two people in the waiting area. Children should be left at home as space is limited.

**If the patient is released to go home following the surgery:**

1. Please have the patient's insurance and pharmacy card available. This may assist us in getting any needed prescriptions filled. (Where you fill your prescription may depend on your insurance.)
2. Depending on the type of anesthesia, the patient will be escorted to the car in a wheelchair or allowed to walk out with an escort. Patients will not be allowed to take a taxi or bus home without an escort. Please make arrangements ahead of time to get home.
3. Inform the nursing staff of any special requests. Patients often have the nurse call a friend to come to escort them. The nurses are happy to coordinate with your escort.

**If the patient is admitted to the hospital following the surgery:**

1. Friends and family may check with the Information Desk on the first floor of the Inpatient Pavilion to see if the patient has been assigned to a room following the surgery and PACU. They may also call the following numbers for the same information, depending on where the surgery took place:
  - The Anschutz Inpatient Pavilion (720) 848-4011
  - The Anschutz Outpatient Pavilion (720) 848-1000
2. Visiting hours vary for each nursing unit. Please check with the Information Desk for the times.

**Concerning Advance Directives**

Your right to make medical care decisions includes giving "advance directives". These are written instructions concerning your wishes about your medical treatment. These instructions are used in the event you become unable to make health care decisions for yourself. *It is very important to share your wishes with your doctor.*

We request that you bring a copy of your advance directive with you the day of your surgery. If you have one, and do not bring it with you the day of surgery, please be prepared to summarize what it says. You will be given the following three choices:

- I want you to do whatever you can to keep me alive.
- There are limits to the amount of treatments that I want.
- I want comfort care, but I do not want life sustaining treatment if there is no chance for meaningful recovery.

**Please understand that this DOES NOT REPLACE your written advance directive** and would prefer that you bring a copy of your actual advance directive. We will also want the name and phone number of a person that would make medical decisions for you if you are not able. Please be prepared to provide this.