Preparing for your Surgical Experience
Dear Patient,

Thank you for choosing Northwest Community Hospital (NCH) for your upcoming surgical procedure. Whether you are scheduled as an outpatient or as an inpatient with an overnight hospital stay, we are committed to providing you with an excellent surgical experience.

We believe that patients who are well-informed and prepared for their surgery usually feel better and recover faster. In addition to the instructions you have already received from our staff, this booklet offers detailed information about your upcoming surgical experience at NCH.

Please review this information closely with those who will be with you on your day of surgery. We encourage you to reference this booklet often, and to use it as a pre-surgical checklist. For general information about the Hospital, visitor amenities, and other medical services, please visit nch.org.

If you have additional questions or concerns about your upcoming surgery, we encourage you to speak with your doctor. For questions about pre-admission testing and for more information about our surgical facilities, please call us at 847.618.7250.

Sincerely,

The NCH Surgical Services Team
Date of surgery

Date ___________________________ Time ___________________________ am/pm

Arrival Time ___________________________ am/pm

The business day before your surgery, please call the Surgical Preparation Area (SPA) at 847.618.7244 between 2 pm and 7 pm to confirm your exact arrival time. Surgical times are subject to change. Please remember to follow the instructions on page 8.

On the day of surgery, we ask that your schedule be flexible. You may be called to come in early or be notified of a delay. It is important that you arrive at least 90 minutes prior to your scheduled surgery to allow time to prepare.

Please notify your surgeon as soon as possible if you develop a fever, rash, cough, cold or other illness – it may be necessary to reschedule your surgery. Please contact your surgeon if, for any other reason, you are unable to keep your appointment.

Pre-admission visit (if required)

A pre-admission visit may be scheduled prior to your surgical procedure. For more information about this visit, please read page 5.

Date ___________________________ Time ___________________________ am/pm
At Northwest Community Hospital (NCH), our goal is to make your surgical experience as comfortable as possible, whether you are scheduled as an outpatient or as an inpatient with an overnight hospital stay. We know that patients usually have a better experience if they are well informed. The information in this booklet has been developed to assist you in preparing for surgery and to understand what your experience will be like at NCH.

A registered nurse from Pre-Admission Testing (PAT) will call you to complete your medical and surgical history. Additional information about your procedure and individual instructions will be given during that time.
Pre-admission visit in PAT

You may be required to come to the Hospital for a pre-admission visit to ensure you are healthy enough to receive anesthesia. A representative from NCH will call you to schedule an appointment.

*This is separate from any pre-surgical appointment that you may need to make with your primary care doctor, surgeon or medical specialist.*

If you wish to meet with an anesthesiologist prior to the day of your surgery, call the pre-registration department at 847.618.3775 to schedule a pre-admission visit.

### What to bring

If you are scheduled for a pre-admission visit, please bring the following items:

- Photo identification (e.g., driver’s license, state ID).
- Written referral from your doctor or pre-certification number from your health plan (if necessary).
- Test results from other facilities and written doctor orders for testing (if necessary).
- Original, labeled prescription containers of all current medications including over-the-counter medicines, herbal supplements and vitamins.
- Complete list of allergies.
- Copy of advance directives (see page 18).
- Names and telephone numbers of your doctors.
- Insurance card(s).
- Payment, if instructed.
What to expect

During your appointment, your patient account information will be reviewed and updated, and your insurance card(s) and photo ID will be copied. You will speak with a registered nurse and the anesthesiologist who will review your medical and surgical history. This appointment will take approximately an hour and may also include a blood test, urine test, EKG and/or chest X-ray.

Where to go

Pre-admission testing is in the North Pavilion. When you arrive at the NCH campus, sheltered parking is available in the Busse Center Garage. Complimentary valet parking is also available at the Hospital’s North Entrance (entrance 2) Monday through Friday, 6 am to 6 pm (see map on last page).

Once you’ve entered the Hospital, follow the signs to the North Pavilion and take the North Elevators up to the second floor. Please inform the receptionist that you are scheduled for a pre-admission visit.

If you have questions about your pre-admission testing appointment, call 847.618.7250.
Whether you are scheduled to have an outpatient or inpatient surgery, there are preparations you will need to make leading up to, and including, the day of your surgical procedure. In addition to your surgeon’s instructions, please follow the instructions outlined on the following pages.
Surgery instructions

Whether you are having outpatient or inpatient surgery, please follow these instructions:

- Beginning at midnight prior to surgery, take nothing by mouth, including water, mints or gum (unless otherwise instructed).
- Bathe/shower prior to surgery. Leave off all makeup, colognes/perfumes, contact lenses, nail polish and jewelry, including wedding bands and body piercings.
- Wear loose, comfortable clothes (button down shirts are preferred).
- Leave valuables at home, except for insurance cards/photo ID and payment (if instructed).
- Do not consume alcoholic beverages or smoke 24 hours before and after surgery.
- Check with your doctor regarding use of any medications including aspirin, Advil, Aleve, Ibuprofen, Motrin, Plavix and dietary/herbal supplements.
- Report any signs of illness, infection or respiratory symptoms to your surgeon – your surgery may need to be rescheduled.
- Depending on your insurance plan, separate pre-certification may be required for your procedure.
- Follow your surgeon’s instructions if any home preparations are needed prior to surgery.
- Review all materials provided.
Special considerations for young patients

We encourage families to tell their children why they are having surgery and what will happen during their visit. Providing your child with this information is very important because children who are well prepared may cope better and recover more quickly than those who have not been prepared. In addition, NCH offers a class for children having surgery. You will be contacted with registration information.

Discuss the surgery in a matter-of-fact way with your child. We suggest that you have the discussion two to four days prior to surgery to allow him or her time to ask questions and get comfortable with the idea. Be honest about any discomfort your child may experience, but offer reassurance that things will get better within a short period of time.

For more information about pediatric surgeries at NCH, visit: nch.org/pediatricsurgery.
On the day of surgery it is important that you arrive on time. You should not eat or drink unless otherwise instructed. Only take medications and/or inhalers that were approved by the Pre-Admission Testing (PAT) nurse and your doctor. If you have any loose teeth or dentures, please inform the nurse or anesthesiologist. Dentures will be removed before surgery.
What to bring

- Insurance card(s).
- Photo Identification (e.g., driver’s license, state ID).
- Pre-certification number from your health plan (if necessary).
- An updated list of current medications.
- List of allergies.
- Copy of advance directives.
- Eyeglass or contact lens cases, if applicable.
- Post-operative equipment such as crutches, a walker, or orthopedic boot, if instructed by your surgeon.
- Sleep apnea mask, if applicable.

Where to go

The main operating rooms are located in the **North Pavilion**. When you arrive at the NCH campus, sheltered parking is available in the Busse Center Garage. Complimentary valet parking is also available at the Hospital’s North Entrance (entrance 2) Monday through Friday, 6 am to 6 pm (see map on last page).

Once you’ve entered the Hospital, follow the signs to the North Pavilion and take the North Elevators up to the second floor. Please inform the receptionist that you are scheduled for surgery.
What to expect

After checking in with the receptionist, you will be escorted to the Surgical Preparation Area (SPA) where you will change into a hospital gown. A nurse will review your health history, check your blood pressure, pulse and temperature, and start an intravenous (IV) line for fluids and medications. You may also receive oral pre-operative medications. Afterward your family or significant others may stay with you in the SPA until your procedure begins.

Prior to surgery, you will meet your operating room nurse and anesthesiologist. They will ask you some of the same questions that you have previously answered in order to confirm information. Your surgeon may speak with you and, if necessary, mark the surgical site with a skin marker before the procedure. When all surgery preparations are complete, your nurse will take you to the operating room, and your family and friends will be directed to the Surgical Services Waiting Area.

A note for family and friends

During your surgery, individuals who accompanied you to the Hospital can remain close by in the Surgical Services Waiting Area, located adjacent to the main operating rooms on the second floor of the North Pavilion. The Waiting Area is a comfortable and accessible space where your family and significant others can receive timely information on the status of your surgical procedure. Complimentary services include coffee and tea, family lockers, and wireless Internet access. NCH’s Village Café is located one floor below, where additional refreshments and snacks can be purchased. Pagers are available if family members or significant others need to leave the immediate area.
Anesthesia

If you require anesthesia, there are four basic types provided:

- **General Anesthesia**: You will be unconscious during the surgery. A device (mask or breathing tube) may be necessary to assist you with breathing during your surgery.

- **Regional Anesthesia**: A particular part of your body will be anesthetized (numbed) during the procedure (e.g., arm, leg). A sedative may also be given with this type of anesthesia.

- **Sedation**: Medications will be given (usually through an intravenous line) to relax you. You may sleep during the procedure but be easily awakened. Local anesthesia is usually given in conjunction with sedation.

- **Local Anesthesia**: An injection will be administered near the surgical site, which will numb the surrounding area. You will be awake and alert. Sedation may be given in conjunction with local anesthesia.

Your anesthesiologist and surgeon will recommend the right anesthetic technique based on your individual needs. They also will answer any questions you have regarding anesthesia.
Following your surgery, you will be transferred to the Post Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU) where nurses, who are specially trained in post-anesthesia care, will monitor your vital signs, surgical site, dressings, and comfort level. You will have an IV and, depending on the type of procedure, you may have other tubes or drains. Depending on the type of surgery, patients generally stay 60-90 minutes. As the anesthesia wears off and you begin to wake up, lights may seem brighter or noise may seem louder than usual. You may experience a sore throat and a dry mouth. These are normal and temporary effects from the anesthesia or the medication you took before surgery. Your nurse will be with you during this time to ensure your comfort.
What to expect

While you recover, your surgeon will speak with your family and friends and update them about your status. If your procedure requires an overnight stay in the Hospital, the anesthesiologist and nurse will determine when you are ready to be transferred to an inpatient unit. Family and friends are routinely not allowed in the PACU, but you will be able to see them when you arrive at your room.

Controlling pain after surgery

If you experience discomfort from your surgery site, please do not hesitate to ask for pain medication. Your doctor will order an appropriate medication for you based on your condition, and the nursing staff will assess your needs throughout recovery. To monitor your level of pain, nurses will use a pain scale, with “zero” representing no pain and “10” indicating the worst pain you’ve ever felt.

A peripheral nerve block may be used in conjunction with oral pain medication to help control pain after surgery. The anesthesiologist will inject numbing medication around the nerve to block pain from the surgical area. This may be done before you are taken to the operating room in a separate treatment area, or immediately after your surgery in the operating room. The blocked area will be weak or numb for up to several days. Protective measures, such as wearing a knee brace or arm sling, must be followed.
Music therapy
Research indicates that listening to music can help reduce the pain and anxiety following a surgical procedure. To enhance your recovery experience in the PACU, complimentary headsets, MP3 players and a variety of musical selections are available for your listening pleasure. You are also welcome to bring your own MP3 player.

A note for outpatients: recovery and discharge
Outpatients will remain in the PACU until the anesthesiologist and nurse determine that you can be discharged. Once you are awake and comfortable, your family or significant others can be with you until you are ready to go home.

All patients are required to have a responsible adult drive them home and stay with them overnight for up to 24 hours following surgery. You will not be allowed to drive yourself, or take a cab or bus without escort. Your procedure may be cancelled if you are unable to make proper arrangements. If you need reliable and affordable transportation services, please refer to page 18. Written instructions and prescription orders will be given to you prior to leaving the Hospital.

Once you are home, make sure you take all medications as instructed, rest, drink plenty of fluids, and eat small, light meals as directed by your surgeon. We will call you after surgery to see how you are doing. You should not drive a car for 24 hours after receiving anesthesia or sedation. Do not consume alcohol for 24 hours after surgery or drive while taking pain medication that makes you drowsy.
Additional Services

Home care
Depending on the type of surgery you have, you may require home healthcare for a few days or weeks following your surgery. You can turn to NCH Home Care, a trusted leader in providing outstanding home healthcare services since 1969.

NCH Home Care provides one-on-one care with 24-hour patient access to registered nurses and regular doctor updates. Most patients are referred through their doctors. However, you may request services directly if you have difficulty leaving your home and require intermittent or skilled healthcare. For more information, call 847.618.7800 or visit nch.org.

Physical therapy
Your doctor may recommend physical therapy. NCH’s Physical Rehabilitation Services provides a wide range of outpatient services at six convenient locations. Our licensed therapists work closely with your doctor and set goals to improve your strength, mobility and coordination after surgery.

For more information, call 847.618.3550 or visit nch.org. To schedule an appointment for physical therapy at NCH, call 847.618.3700. A doctor’s order is required.
Transportation

NCH offers patients who reside in the surrounding communities with safe, reliable and affordable means of transportation to and from the Hospital and other NCH locations. For more information about the NCH Courtesy Van and Medicar transport services, call 847.618.6480.

Advance directives

Advance directives are a legally recognized means for communicating your healthcare wishes if you are too sick to make decisions. These pre-surgical decisions should be considered and discussed with your family members prior to any surgery.

- **Healthcare Power of Attorney (POA)** – a legal document that names another person at least eighteen years old to make medical decisions on your behalf.

- **Living Will** – a legal document that states you do not want life-prolonging medical care in the event that you become terminally ill and unable to make decisions.

Hospital chaplains are available 24/7 to help you make these important decisions. To speak with a chaplain, ask a staff member to contact Spiritual Care Services, or call 847.618.4250.

Patient Rights & Responsibilities

While you are a patient at Northwest Community Hospital, we will do our best to respect your personal rights. Visit nch.org/rights to learn more.
Your pre-operative checklist

Use this page as a reminder to follow the instructions outlined within this booklet. On the back is a map of the NCH campus with your destination highlighted in green.

The Days Prior to Surgery

☐ Carefully review this checklist and booklet. If you have questions regarding the instructions, call 847.618.7255
☐ Call your surgeon if you have questions about surgery, or if you become ill.
☐ For outpatient procedures, make arrangements for a ride home and for someone to stay with you.

The Day Before Surgery

☐ Call the Surgical Preparation Area (SPA) at 847.618.7244 between 2 and 7 pm for your arrival time.
☐ Carefully review this checklist and booklet.
☐ Call your surgeon if you have questions about surgery, or if you become ill.
☐ Follow your surgeon’s instructions if any home preparations are needed prior to surgery.

The Day of Surgery

☐ Carefully review this checklist and booklet, especially the instructions on pages 8 through 11. Call 847.618.7244 with any questions.
☐ Arrive on time. Your surgery time is approximate and may be adjusted to an earlier or later time if unforeseen situations arise.
☐ Do not eat or drink anything, unless otherwise instructed.
☐ Park in the Busse Center Garage, or you can be dropped off at North Entrance 2. Complimentary valet service is also available. Once in the North Pavilion, take the North Elevators up to the second floor. Notify the receptionist of your arrival.
Northwest Community Hospital and Day Surgery Center are charitable organizations and provide financial assistance to people who are eligible. For more information, please call 847.618.4542 or visit our website at nch.org.