



**INLAND  
HOSPITAL**

*Where You Come First*

## **Your Guide to Surgery at Inland Hospital**



**INLAND  
HOSPITAL**

*Where You Come First*

A member of  
**EASTERN MAINE  
HEALTHCARE**  
SYSTEMS

200 Kennedy Memorial Drive,  
Waterville ME 04901  
207-861-3000  
[www.inlandhospital.org](http://www.inlandhospital.org)

A member of  
**EASTERN MAINE  
HEALTHCARE**  
SYSTEMS

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Inland Hospital is pleased to care for you during your upcoming surgery. We realize this may be an anxious time for you. We want you to know that Inland's highly qualified team is dedicated to making your surgery and recovery successful. We are also committed to ensuring your comfort during your stay with us. Please let us know along the way how we can help you feel more comfortable!

If you have any questions after reading this Pre-Op Guide, please call the Day Surgery Unit and we will be glad to give you the information you need to feel confident about your surgical procedure and the care you will receive here.

We look forward to seeing you soon!

Sincerely,

Helen Morar, RN  
Director, Surgical Services  
Inland Hospital

Your Surgery: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of surgery: \_\_\_\_\_

Your tentative surgery time is:

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Inland Hospital address:  
200 Kennedy Memorial Drive, Waterville ME 04901

Main switchboard: 861-3000

Surgical Department: **861-3255**

Inland Surgical Department Director:

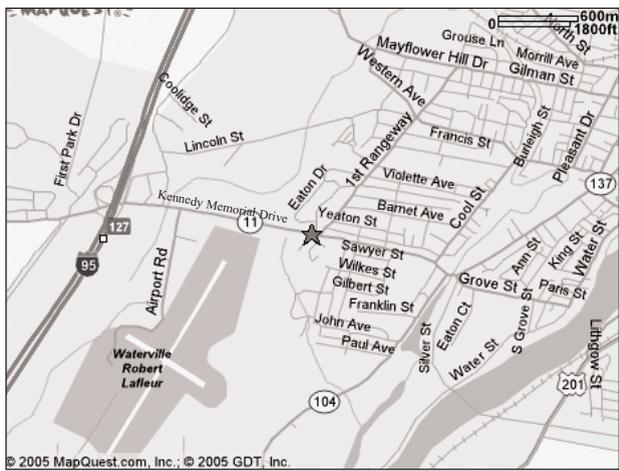
Helen Morar, 861-3258

Your doctor's name: \_\_\_\_\_

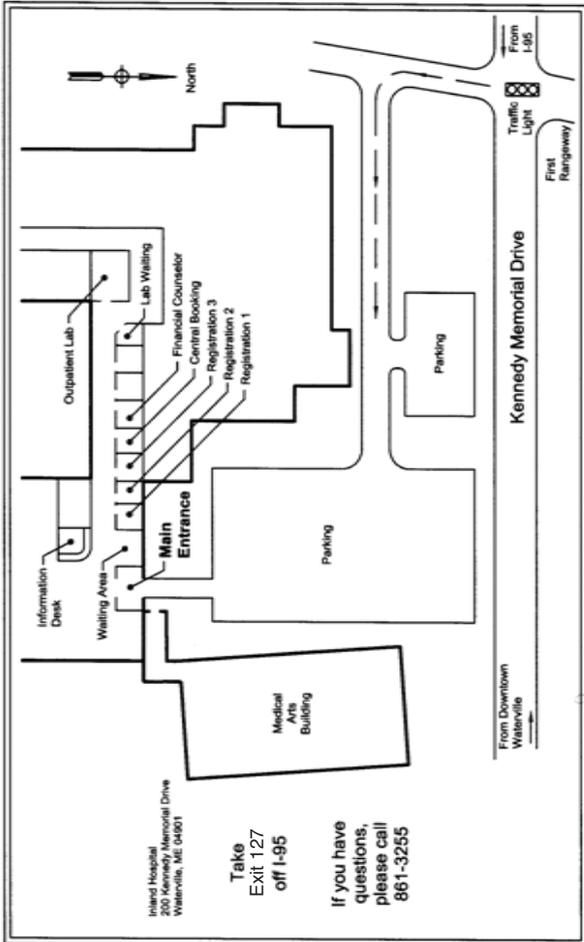
Doctor's phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

You will be contacted by us the day before your surgery to review this information. If you will be away, please call us immediately at 861-3250 so that we can make arrangements.

**The pre-op information in this booklet is also available on our web site: [www.inlandhospital.org](http://www.inlandhospital.org).**



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## Tobacco free environment

The Inland Hospital campus is tobacco-free: indoors and on facility property outdoors.

## Use of cellular phones in the hospital

Because cell phones can affect the proper working of certain medical equipment, indoor use of cell phones is limited to several “cell phone safe” areas. Please ask any Inland staff member to assist you in locating Inland’s cell phone safe areas. Thank you for your attention to this important policy in our hospital.

## Services for family and friends

**Waiting areas:** Your nurse will show your family the surgery waiting area. A phone, TV and magazines are available.

**Internet kiosks:** Patients and visitors can stay in touch with family and friends via the Internet by accessing their web based email accounts at computers located in several waiting areas. Inland provides this service at no cost.

**Food services:** Inland’s Garden Café is located on the main level near the double elevators.

**Gift shop:** Inland’s Corner Stone Gift Shoppe is located in the main entrance lobby. Flowers, balloons, cards and special gifts are available.

- Pain control
- Signs of infection
- Medications
- Diet
- Home care nurses and health aides
- Bandages and dressings
- Bathing
- Stitches, staples and incision care
- Follow-up visits with doctors
- Driving and other activities
- Returning to work

### **Leaving the Hospital**

An Inland Hospital staff member or volunteer will take you to your car in a wheelchair. You won't be allowed to drive yourself home, so make sure you have an adult family member or friend available. Include them in your home care plan. The more they know about your health and surgery, the more helpful they can be in your recovery. Your doctor or nurse can speak with them about any concerns or questions.

### **Follow-up medical care**

Your doctor will arrange a follow-up appointment. You will also receive a follow-up phone call from an Inland Hospital surgical nurse one day after your surgery. If you have questions, do not hesitate to call your doctor or the Inland surgical department at 861-3250.

### **Your feedback**

After you leave the hospital, you may receive a survey in the mail asking for your comments about the care you received at Inland. We encourage you to take a few minutes to complete the survey because your feedback is very important to us! You will be asked to comment on a variety of areas, including your level of satisfaction with the medical care you received, the food, the surroundings and much more. The survey also allows you to recognize Inland staff members who went above and beyond for you during your stay. Your opinion is critical as we strive for continuous improvement in all areas!

### **Interpreter services**

Inland is committed to communicating clearly with all patients. Please inform your doctor in advance about your language or hearing needs so he or she can alert the hospital. This will allow us to help make your hospital stay as smooth as possible. If you need an interpreter, please notify your doctor as soon as possible. The hospital TDD/TYY phone number is 872-2211.

### **Talk with your Physician**

Your physician will help you understand why your surgery is needed and what will be involved. Feel free to make a list of questions to ask.

### **Pre-op planning by the hospital**

An Inland pre-op nurse will call you prior to your surgery. He or she will review your health history, discuss the pre-op instructions from this booklet, which include what medications to take, what food and drink is appropriate, and any special needs you may have. Feel free to ask questions at this time.

The day before the surgery, an Inland nurse will call you again to confirm your time of arrival the following day.

As part of the pre-operative assessment process, you will meet with a member of the Anesthesia Department – usually on the morning of your surgery. Patients having major surgery, total joint replacement, or having major medical issues, may be scheduled for a visit at the Inland Pre-Operative Assessment Clinic. Here, a member of the Anesthesia Department will evaluate medical issues and answer your questions. If you have questions regarding your anesthesia sooner you can talk with a member of the Anesthesia Department by calling 861-3250 between 8am and 3pm.

### **Preparing for surgery**

Follow your doctor's instructions before surgery. This pre-surgery checklist will be helpful:

- Call your doctor if you become ill the day before your surgery. Even a cold or flu can delay your surgery.
- Tell your doctor and the hospital about any medications you are taking, including: aspirin, vitamins, diuretics for high blood pressure, heart medication, diabetes medicine, antacids, diet medications, or herbal supplements. Ask if you should continue to take them.
- If you smoke, try to quit or at least cut down.
- If you are having abdominal surgery, ask what you need to do to clear your bowels.
- Tell your doctor if you have allergies to any medications or foods.

### **What to bring with you to the hospital**

- Your social security number and your spouse's social security number if your insurance policy is in your spouse's name.
- Your insurance policy numbers, forms or cards.
- Medicare or Medicaid papers, if applicable.
- Any advance directives.
- Regular medications in their original containers.
- A list of the medications you take – even vitamins (name, dose, and how often you take them).
- Inhalers, if applicable.
- Contact lens case and solution, eyeglasses case, hearing aid case, if applicable.
- If you'll be staying overnight, bring your personal toiletries, pajamas, robe, slippers (slippers should have backs and rubber soles for safety).

### **What not to bring to the hospital**

- Leave valuables at home (cash, credit cards, checkbook, watch, jewelry). The hospital cannot be responsible for personal belongings.

### **What to wear**

- Wear comfortable, loose clothing. A sweat suit is appropriate.

### **What not to wear**

- Nail polish, lipstick, and other make-up.
- Remove bobby pins from your hair and all jewelry, including body piercing jewelry, such as belly or tongue rings. The exception is a wedding band, unless your surgery is on your left hand.

### **Just for children**

- Bring your child's favorite blanket or toy.
- Let us know if your child has a nickname they prefer. This will allow us to make them feel more comfortable.
- Feel free to bring your child for a tour on the day the child has pre-op lab work performed. Seeing the environment and meeting some of the staff may help relieve some of the normal anxiety the child is feeling. Please call ahead to ensure we can greet you at a specific time, 861-3250.

### **Pain management**

Some pain is expected even after minor surgery due to the incision and swelling. Everyone has a different tolerance when it comes to pain.

Our method of managing individual pain is to ask you to rate your level of pain on a scale from one to ten, with one being "no pain" and ten being "severe pain".

Your doctor will order the pain medication that is right for you. Stay on top of your pain and take your medication as directed. If you allow the pain to become too severe, it can be more difficult to get it back under control.

Pain medication lets you be up and around and more comfortable – both of which will help speed your recovery. Taken as directed, pain medication does not lead to addiction during the short time you will need it.

### **Know when to call your doctor**

Here are a few warning signs to watch for during your recovery. Remember, help or advice is just a phone call away if:

- There is increased swelling or redness at the incision site, odor or discharge.
- You still have pain an hour after taking your pain medication. (It may not have been strong enough.)
- You feel groggy, dizzy or too sleepy. (Medication may be too strong.)
- You have nausea, vomiting or diarrhea after taking medication. (You may need to try a different medicine that is easier on your stomach.)
- You are nauseated and vomiting after you come home and are unable to keep liquids down. (You could be at risk for dehydration.)
- You have numbness, increased swelling, or bluish fingers or toes. (These are signs of circulation problems.)
- Your dressing gets wet. (This will increase the risk of infection.)
- Your drainage tube gets wet or displaced. (Don't try to replace or readjust it yourself.)

If you experience any of these warning signs, call your doctor for direction.

### **Going Home**

Your doctor will let you know when it is appropriate for you to go home from the hospital. Be sure to ask questions you may have about how to care for yourself at home or if home health care is needed in your case. Most of your recovery time is likely to be spent at home so making a care plan for home ahead of time is a good idea. Here are some topics you may want to discuss with your doctor or nurse before heading home:

4) Purse your lips as if to whistle or kiss. Then breathe out slowly through your pursed lips.

5) Then try coughing. Cough out forcefully with 2-3 short coughs until all the air has been pushed out. Breathe in slowly through the nose.

Practice these steps - they will help you to help yourself!

### Activity

- After surgery your body will use a lot of your energy to heal. Plan on plenty of time to rest, gradually returning to your normal activities.
- Walking will help your system get back to normal functioning quicker because it gets the blood flowing better. Make sure you have help getting out of bed for the first time.
- Work back into exercise slowly. Your doctor will tell you when you can safely return to your regular level of activities.

### Diet

Liquids are easier to digest than solid food. After surgery you may only want liquids. We advise a progressive diet, starting with liquids (tea, soda, and clear soup) and progressing to semi-solids (applesauce, yogurt, ice cream). Stay away from spicy or fried foods. Once you are doing well with semi-solids and dairy foods, you may ease back into a regular diet. Your doctor will advise you if your diet will be different from what it was before surgery. Keep up your fluid intake after surgery. Drink 6-8 glasses of water a day unless you are told otherwise.

### Incision and dressing care

You may have a dressing over your incision. You will need to keep it clean and dry as you heal. Sometimes a drain or tube is in place to remove fluid so your body can recover. If you have a dressing, keep it dry until your doctor says you may remove it. Water can weaken stitches and increase the risk of infection. Your doctor will tell you when you can bathe or shower again.

It's normal to have a slightly red, swollen incision. Call your doctor if there is increased swelling or redness at the incision site, odor or discharge. Fever is also a sign of infection, so it's important to check your temperature and call your doctor if you have a fever over the norm of 98.6.

If you had surgery on your arm, leg or head, you may be told to keep the incision elevated. This will decrease swelling, ease pain and prevent blood under the skin from pooling around the incision. Place a pillow under your arm, leg or head to bring your incision higher than your chest whenever sitting or lying down.

### Other pre-op planning

- Shower or bathe prior to arrival for your surgery.
- Arrange to have an adult family member or friend drive you home after the surgery. **You will not be allowed to drive yourself home and your surgery will be canceled if you do not have an escort home.**
- Make sure you have all you need waiting for you when you return home. Consider what special food or other items you may need (clear soup, etc).

### The night before surgery

- If instructed, wash with antibacterial soap where the incision will be made. Hair on this area will be shaved or trimmed at the hospital.
- Do not eat any solid food after midnight the night before surgery, including mints and chewing gum. You may have up to eight ounces (one glass) of water up until three hours before surgery. Liquids cannot include carbonated beverages, milk, coffee creamer or orange juice.
- Small children may have six ounces of clear liquids (water or apple juice) up to two hours before surgery.
- Solid foods are never allowed before surgery. If you eat after midnight, your surgery may be canceled.
- Do not smoke or chew tobacco.
- If you've been told to keep taking a medication, take it with a few sips of water.

### Arriving for surgery

Enter Inland Hospital through the main entrance (near the Medical Arts Building). There is a map to the hospital on page 12 of this booklet or access directions on our web site [www.inlandhospital.org](http://www.inlandhospital.org). Parking is located in the front of the hospital. There is a front door drop off area with wheelchairs available if needed. When you arrive, tell the greeter that you need to register and they will take you to a patient registration clerk to complete the admission paperwork.

We understand that you may be nervous about your surgery and we want to help make your hospital stay as comfortable as possible. If you like, we can meet you at the door at a specific time and escort you and your family to all your destinations. Just call the *Meet Rita* program at 861-3325 to schedule a time. We named this program after our first participant. It is our pleasure to help you in any way!

Be sure to bring your insurance card or any other forms you will need for the patient registration clerk. If you're unsure which forms you may need to bring, please feel free to call our admissions office at 861-3300. When you check in, you will receive an ID bracelet and be taken to a room to get ready. Your family and friends may be asked to stay in a waiting area.

## Anesthesia

You may be given medication to help you relax before going into surgery.

## It's time for surgery - what to expect

You may be given medication to help you relax before going into surgery. An IV will be hooked up to your hand or arm. You will be taken in a wheelchair or a rolling bed to a pre-op area or you may go right into surgery. Along the way, you may notice other patients, surgical staff, or equipment.

## In the operating room

The Operating Room (OR) provides the most sterile and safe surgical setting possible. The OR is staffed by a team of **highly trained professionals** who will include:

- A Surgeon, who is responsible for your overall care, leads your surgical team.
- A Surgical Assistant helps on many major surgeries.
- An Anesthesiologist or Nurse Anesthetist provides anesthesia or medication, and monitors vital signs.
- A Scrub Nurse or Surgical Technologist sets up instruments and assists the surgeon.
- A Circulating Nurse prepares the OR, makes sure sterile methods are followed and helps other team members.

## The equipment

- An **IV** (intravenous line) will be used to provide fluids to your body, or give you medication or blood. An IV feels like a pinprick when it is inserted into your arm or hand.
- Monitors** show your vital signs (blood pressure, heart rate, heart rhythm, etc).
- An **electrocardiogram** records your heart functions. It is connected by wires to several round, sticky patches that are placed on your upper body.
- A **pulse oximeter**, placed on your finger, monitors your blood's oxygen level.
- The OR is filled with many **bright lights** overhead.

## After surgery in the post anesthesia care unit-PACU/recovery room

After surgery, you will be brought to the **post-anesthesia care unit-PACU** (better known as the recovery room). Here you will receive constant care from a post-anesthesia care nurse. When you're coming out of surgery, your doctor may call or visit your family or friends to let them know how you are doing.

## In the PACU

As the anesthesia wears off, you will wake up in the brightly-lit **PACU**. Noises may sound louder than normal. You may have blurry vision, a dry mouth, chills or nausea. A nurse will check your dressing and blood pressure often. You may have an IV, or other tubes used for drainage. The site of your surgery may hurt or burn, so ask your nurse for pain medication if you need it. You may be asked to do deep breathing and coughing to help clear your lungs. Your nurse may ask you to move around in bed a bit, since even these small movements will help you recover faster. Parents may be able to visit their children in the PACU.

## After the PACU

The PACU nurse works with the anesthesiologist or nurse anesthetist to decide when you can be moved from the PACU. It's often an hour or more after surgery.

If you're an inpatient, you'll be taken to your hospital room, where you'll stay for at least one night. Your family and friends may see you the same day as your surgery.

If you're an outpatient, you'll be taken to another unit to recover, or back to the outpatient area for discharge. Be sure to have an adult friend or family member drive you home after surgery.

## Your recovery

Your doctor and other medical staff from Inland Hospital will check on you after your surgery. Therapists, dietitians, nurse case managers, clergy and others will be nearby to help you as needed. Please follow your health care team's advice about walking, deep breathing, and eating. If you feel pain or nausea, tell them immediately.

## Deep breathing and coughing

Deep breathing and coughing after your surgery improves your circulation and clears your lungs. Follow these steps as soon as you wake up from surgery and then repeat them ten times during every waking hour for the first few days after surgery:

- 1) Before coughing, you will probably want to support your incision area by applying a little pressure over it, using your hand, blanket or pillow to prevent jarring. And remember, it will be easier if you relax.
- 2) Take in a slow, deep breath through your nose.
- 3) Hold it for 3-5 seconds.