

# WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT PREOPERATIVE EVALUATION

In the Clinic  
Annals of Internal Medicine  
annals.org

## What is a preoperative evaluation?

- Most patients have a check-up before having surgery. This is to see if there is anything that puts you at high risk for complications around the time of your surgery.
- Talk with your doctor about your risks for surgery complications and what you can do to lower them.
- If you are at high risk, the doctor will help you make changes to lower your risk. Sometimes your doctor might suggest that you delay nonemergency surgery so that the things that put you at risk can be controlled better.
- Heart problems, lung problems, stroke, bleeding problems, blood clots, and infections are some of the serious medical problems that can happen around the time of surgery.
- The risks of surgery depend on the type of surgery, your age, how healthy you are, and your health habits.
- There are usually few complications with such surgeries as cataract surgery, other outpatient surgeries, and surgery without general anesthesia. Complications happen more often with major surgeries, such as those in which the chest or abdomen are opened or surgery with general anesthesia.



dietary or herbal supplements or treatments. Your doctor will tell you whether you should stop or keep taking these around the time of surgery.

- Keep a healthy body weight and stay active so that you go into surgery in good physical shape.
- Tell your doctor if you have problems with bleeding, bruise easily, or if anyone in your family has a bleeding problem.

## What can you do to lower the risk of surgical complications?

- If you drink alcohol, stop all alcohol 4 weeks before surgery or at least have no more than 2 drinks a day.
- If you smoke, you should quit before surgery. It is best if you quit 4 to 8 weeks before surgery.
- Tell your doctor about all prescription and over-the-counter drugs that you take, including any

## Will my doctor do tests before surgery?

- If you are healthy and having minor surgery, you may not need any tests.
- If you have medical problems, you may need blood tests, a chest X-ray, or heart tests.
- If you had tests in the 4 months before your surgery, tell your doctor. You may not need the tests again.

## For More Information

### Web Sites With Information on Preoperative Evaluation

[www.ahrq.gov/consumer/quicktips/tipsurgery.htm](http://www.ahrq.gov/consumer/quicktips/tipsurgery.htm)

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality:  
Quick Tips—When Planning for Surgery

[www.facs.org/public\\_info/operation/wnao.html](http://www.facs.org/public_info/operation/wnao.html)

American College of Surgeons: When You Need an Operation

[www.sambahq.org/patient-info/faqs.html](http://www.sambahq.org/patient-info/faqs.html)

Society for Ambulatory Anesthesia: Frequently Asked Questions

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