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easy
read
Australia

Having Surgery



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About this easy read booklet



This booklet is about having surgery.



You can learn about what will happen when you go to hospital for surgery.



If you are worried about your health, you should talk to a doctor or nurse.



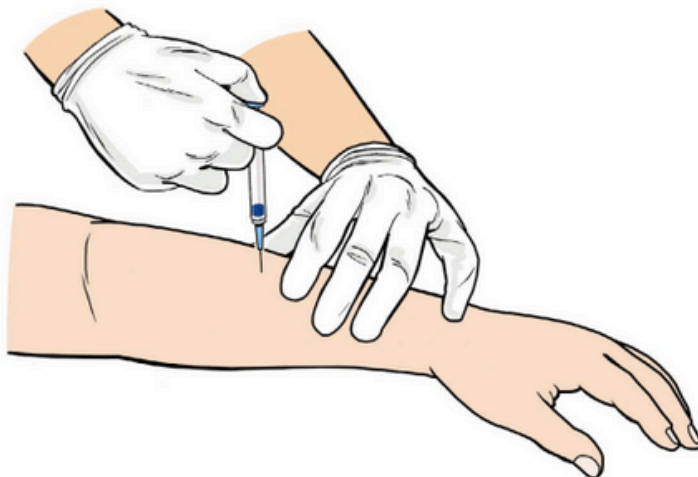
Having minor surgery



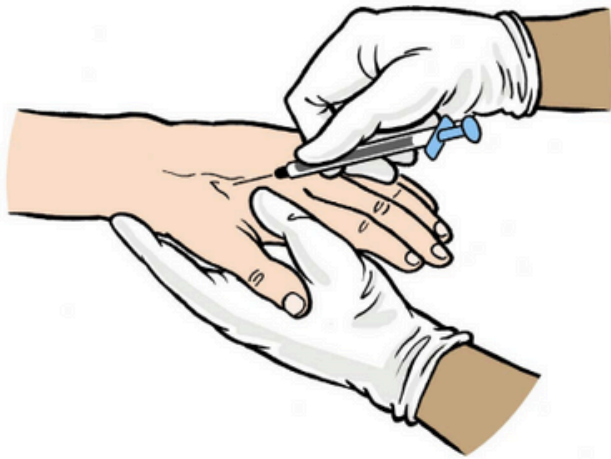
Minor surgery means having a small **operation**. An **operation** is when a doctor removes, replaces or fixes something inside your body.



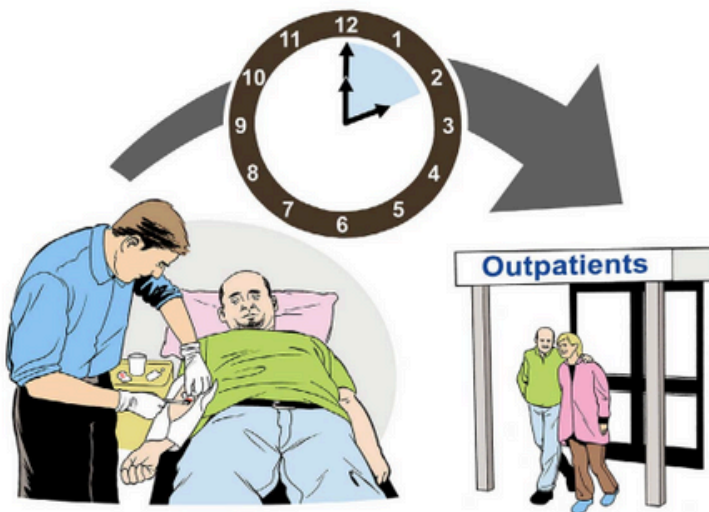
You will be awake during minor surgery. But the doctor will give you medicine so you do not feel anything.



You will usually have the medicine in a small **injection** on the part of your body where you will have the surgery.



An **injection** is when a needle is put through your skin to put medicine into your body.



You can usually go home a few hours after the operation.



Having major surgery



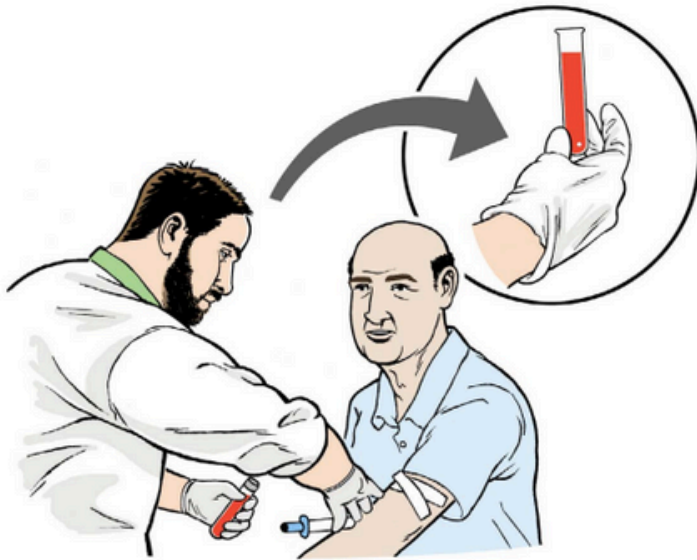
Major surgery means having a bigger operation. Before major surgery, your doctor may want you to have some more tests. This is to make sure it is OK for you to have surgery.



These tests may include **blood tests, scans, x-rays** or other tests.



Scans and x-rays are ways of taking photos of the inside of the body.



Blood tests are when a doctor looks at a small sample of blood.



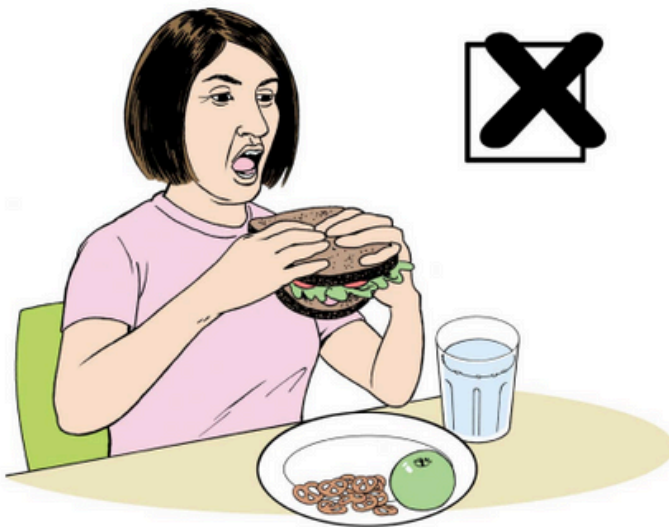
The doctor will ask you about any medicines you take, for example for **asthma** or **diabetes**. The doctor will tell you how to take your medicines before surgery.



Asthma is a condition where people find it hard to breathe.



Diabetes is an illness where the body cannot use sugar properly.



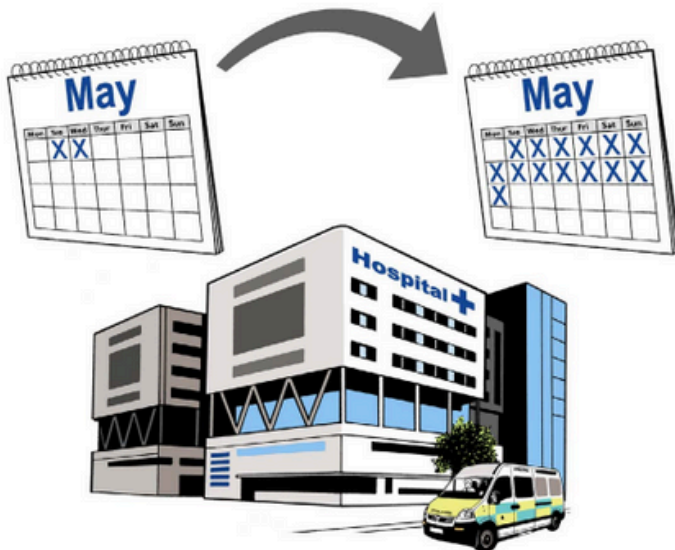
Usually you must not eat or drink anything for a few hours before major surgery.



Ask the doctor what time you have to stop eating and drinking.



When you go for surgery you will need someone to come with you. They can support you and stay for as long as you need them.



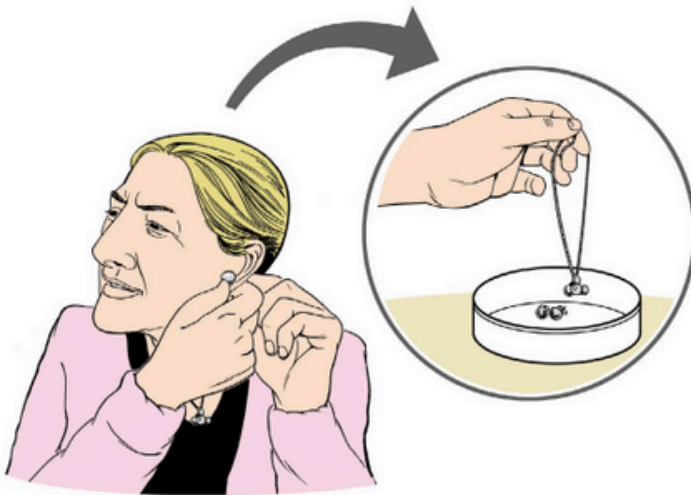
After surgery you might go home the same day. Sometimes you will need to stay in hospital for a few days or weeks.



Pack a bag to take into hospital with you. You may need your toothbrush, washing things, nightwear and some clothes.



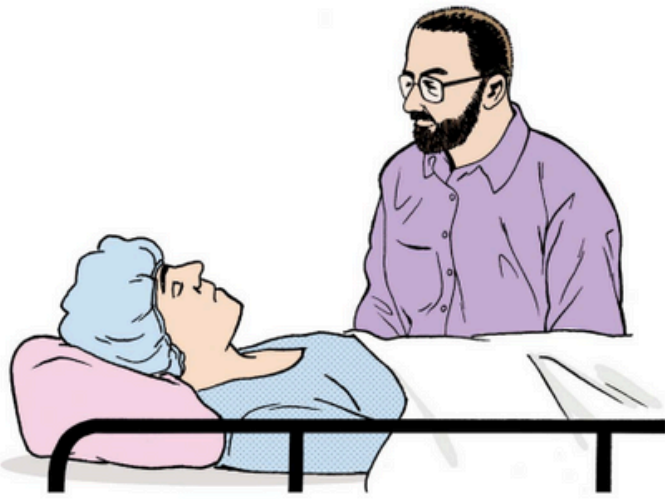
Pack or wear some loose, comfy clothing. This will be easier to wear after your operation.



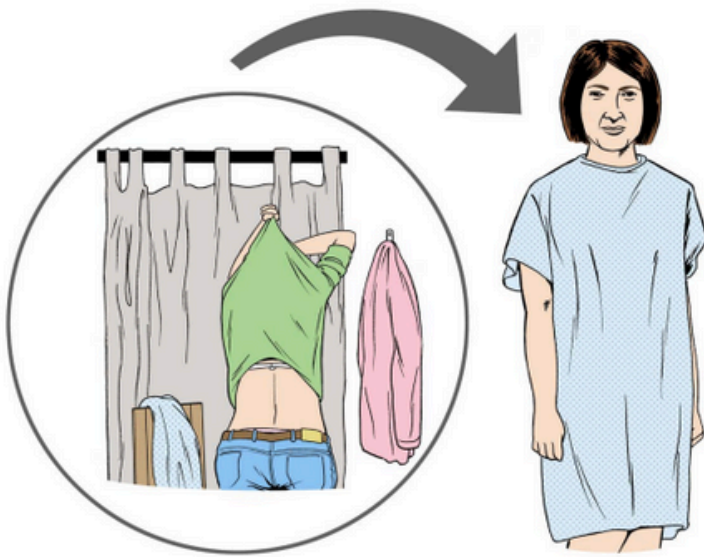
Leave any jewellery at home where it will be safe. You cannot wear it during the operation.



A doctor called a **surgeon** will do the operation. They are specially trained to do operations. There will also be other health professionals looking after you during the operation and after it.



The person who is supporting you can stay with you before the operation.



Before the operation, you take off your clothes and put on a hospital gown.



Your nurse may give you long tight socks to wear. You wear these during and after the operation. They help the blood move around your body.



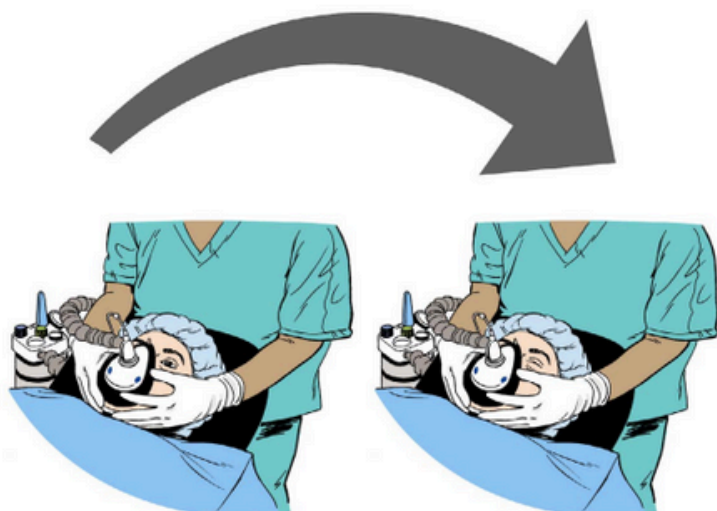
Your doctor or nurse may give you medicine to help you relax.



The nurse will clean the part of your body that is going to be operated on. They may shave it too.



For major surgery you will have a **general anaesthetic**. This is medicine to make you go to sleep for a short time, so you don't feel any pain when you have an operation.



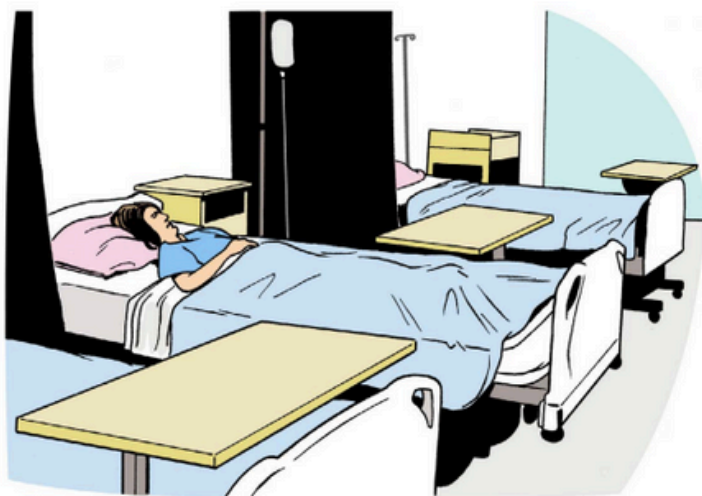
Then you breathe in gas through a face mask. This will put you into a deep sleep.



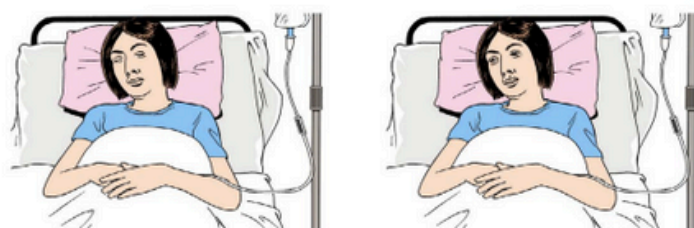
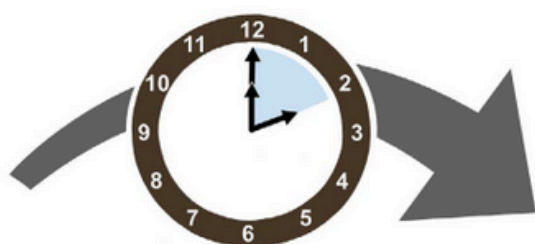
When you are completely asleep the surgeon will do the operation. You will not feel anything while you are asleep.



Recovering after surgery



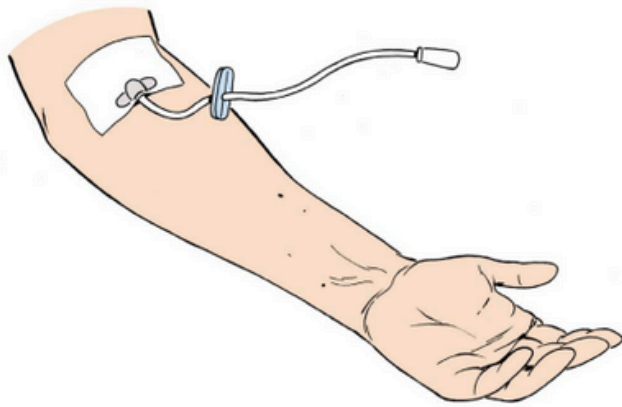
After surgery you will be taken to a recovery room. This is where you are looked after until you wake up.



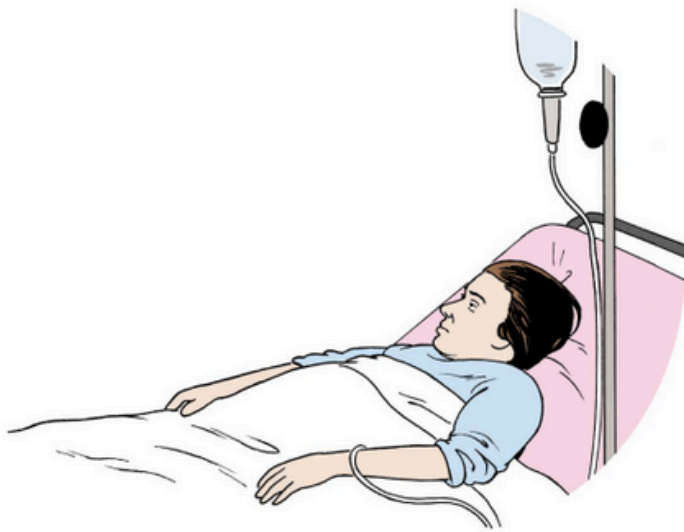
If you have had a general anaesthetic you usually wake up within one to two hours.



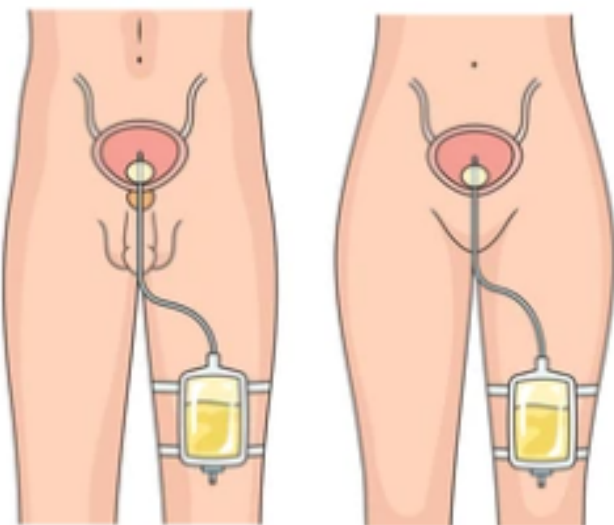
When you wake, you may feel sleepy or confused for some time.



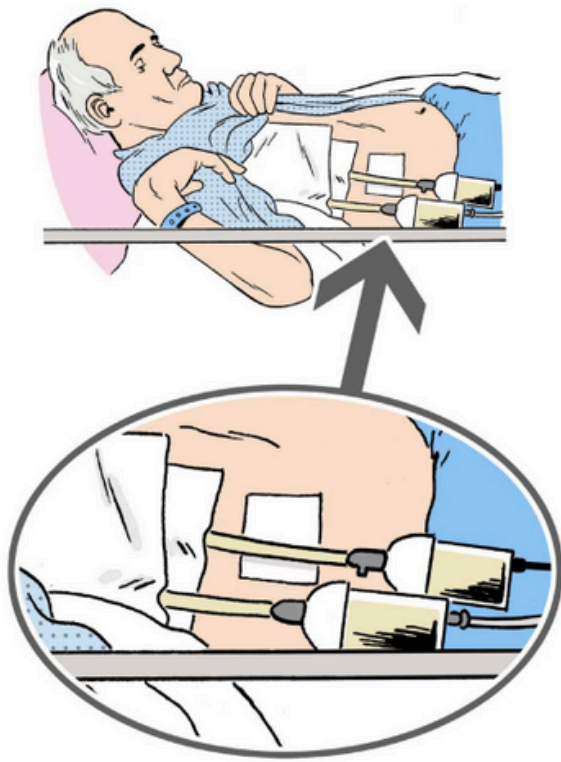
When you wake up, you may have some tubes attached to you:



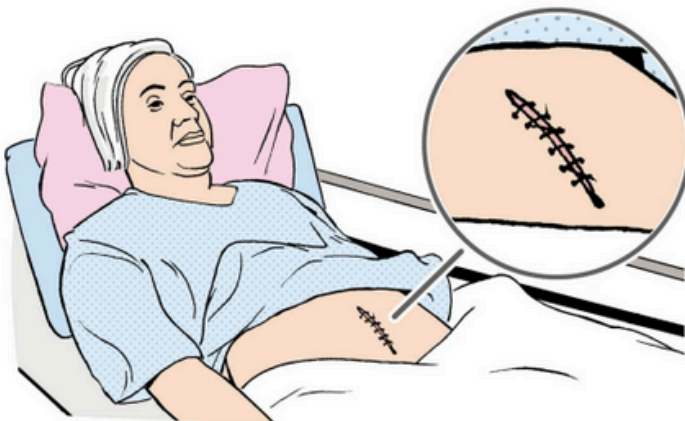
- You may have a tube in your arm or hand. This gives you fluids and medicines until you can eat and drink.



- You may have a tube coming out from where you pee. This is called a **catheter**. Your pee comes down this tube into a bag. This means you can pee without going to the toilet.



- You may have a tube coming out from where the operation was done. This is called a drain. It collects any fluid from your **surgical wound**.



A **surgical wound** is a cut in the skin where an operation was done.



You might feel pain. It's important to tell your nurse or the person who gives you support if you are in pain. You can have medicine to help.



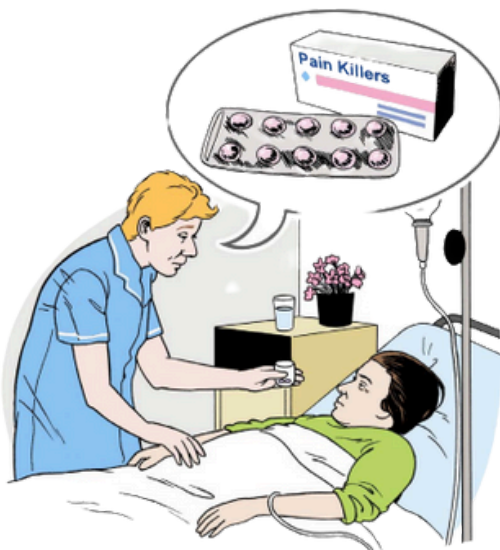
Side effects



There are sometimes **side effects** after surgery. Side effects are things that happen in your body because of the surgery.



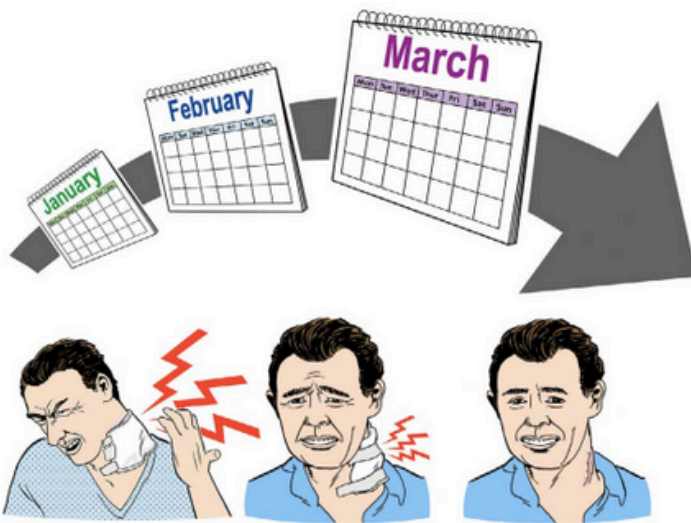
Pain can be a side effect. You will usually have some pain after an operation. It is very important to tell your nurse or doctor that you are in pain.



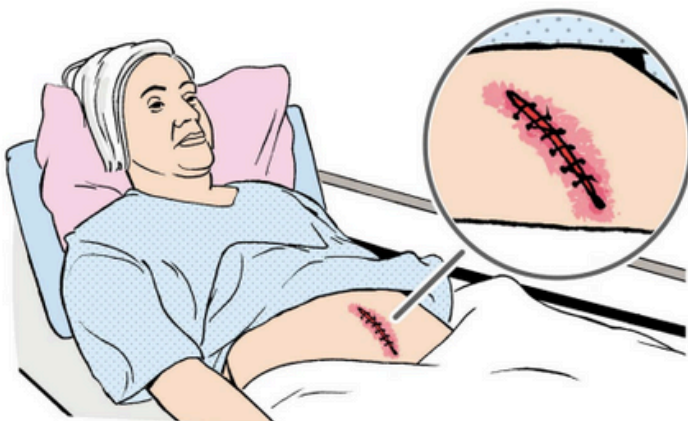
They can give you medicine to stop the pain.



Swelling, soreness and stiffness can be side effects. It's normal for the area of the operation to be swollen, sore or stiff.



This should slowly get better as you heal.



Another side effect you could have after an operation is an **infection**. An infection is when your body is attacked by a bacteria or virus. Infections cause you harm and might make you feel unwell.



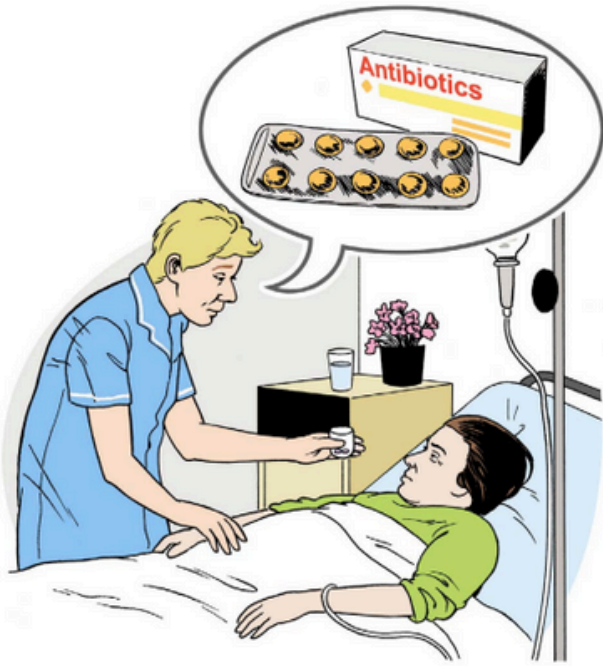
Tell a nurse or doctor straight away if your surgical wound is hot, painful, bleeds or leaks any fluid. This means your wound may have an infection.



It is important that surgical wounds are kept clean and the dressings are changed often. In hospital, a nurse will do this for you.



When you go home a nurse may come to your house to check and clean your surgical wound.



If your surgical wound becomes infected the doctor may give you some antibiotics. These are medicines that stop infections in your body.



Diet after surgery



After surgery you will need to eat healthy food. This helps your body to heal.



Some operations can make eating hard. For example, operations on your throat, stomach or **bowel**.



If you have any problems eating or drinking after surgery, talk to a doctor or nurse. They can make sure you get any help you need.



If you need more information



For more information or support
in Australia:

Phone Cancer Council on
13 11 20



For language support, call

13 14 50

Ask for Cancer Council Victoria.



Or go to the website

www.cancervic.org.au

For more easy ready booklets on many cancer topics, go to
macmillan.org.uk/easyread.

These booklets are made in the UK, so some information may not
be the same in Australia.

Write down any questions you want to ask your doctor:
