Thank you for choosing Vail Valley Medical Center for your surgery!

The following pages include important information about preparing for your surgery at Vail Valley Medical Center. Please take a few minutes to read the entire package and pay particular attention to the instructions it provides.

Once your surgery has been scheduled, you will be directed by your surgeon’s office to make an appointment with PreSurgical Planning. The purpose of the PreSurgical Planning interview is to record your medical history and to conduct appropriate preadmission testing when necessary. We will also discuss your Preoperation instructions and other pertinent information to adequately prepare for your surgery and hospital care.

Please schedule your interview as soon as possible by calling PreSurgical Planning at Vail Valley Medical Center, (970) 479-5144. If you are currently taking antibiotics, have had surgery in the past 30 days, or have been hospitalized in the past six months, please contact PreSurgical Planning at least a week prior to the date of your surgery.

Instructions for the Night Before Surgery

Starting at Midnight

Do not eat anything
• No food of any kind
• No candy, including hard candy
• Do not chew gum

Do not drink anything

You may take medications with a sip of water
• When you wake up the morning of surgery
• This includes:
  • Medications you have been instructed to take by your surgeon or pre-admission nurse;
  • Pain medications, though they may cause nausea on an empty stomach.

Preparing for Your Surgery

General Instructions
(Please refer to eating and drinking instructions above)

• Leave valuables at home (including jewelry), but be sure to bring a form of payment for medications that may be prescribed to you.
• For your safety, do not bring your prescription or over-the-counter medications from home to the hospital with you. We will provide you with any medications you need while you are here.
• Remove all make-up prior to arrival on the day of surgery.
• Do not shave at or near your surgical site (the area where you will be operated on).
• Wear comfortable clothing to the hospital.
• Bring all insurance information with you to the hospital.
• Bring crutches for lower extremity surgery if available.
• Refrain from smoking for 24 hours prior to surgery.
• Do not drink alcohol the night before surgery.
• Drink plenty of water the day and night before surgery.
• Report any cuts or abrasions around the surgical site to your surgeon prior to the day of surgery.
• All patients must first check in at Admissions on arrival.
• Bring something enjoyable to read or to listen to in the event of an unexpected delay.
Preparing for Your Surgery (continued)

Outpatient Surgery
- You must have a ride home arranged before you arrive for surgery.
- If you live alone, make arrangements for someone to stay with you the first night after surgery.
- Have your driver’s contact number available the day of surgery.

Instructions for Family Members
- On weekdays, a nurse liaison is available to greet you and provide periodic reports on the status of your family member or loved one as they progress through preparation, surgery and recovery. They also can answer your questions and help make you comfortable.
- Each patient is allowed to have one companion accompany them to Preop before surgery and join them in PACU (Perianesthesia Aftercare Unit) after surgery. The Nurse Liaison will escort you to Preop after the patient is ready for surgery, and to PACU when it is appropriate for a visit.
- The surgery waiting area is on Level 2R, where an electronic patient tracking board is provided for family members.
- The hospital cafeteria is located on Level B (basement).

About Your Medications
- Your regular medications will be ordered by your physician while you are a patient here. It is very important that your surgeon and nurses know the exact name, spelling, dose, and frequency of all medications that you are currently taking. Please have a written record of this information and bring it with you to your Presurgical Planning appointment and on the day of surgery.
- Your surgeon and/or preadmission nurse will give you instructions on which medications to take and which medications to avoid at the presurgical appointment.

Getting Your Skin Ready

Chlorhexidine Soap Shower
Skin is not sterile, and germs on your skin can increase the risk of an infection. But following the procedures below, including washing with a special soap that contains 4% chlorhexidine gluconate (CHG) starting three days before your surgery, has been shown to help decrease your risk of infection.

Using a soap such as Hibiclens or another brand with 4% CHG soap as directed below, follow these instructions.

Starting 3 Days Prior to Surgery
Following the steps below, shower daily beginning three days before surgery and including the day of surgery before coming to the hospital.

☐ Step 1: Wash your hair, face, and body, with your normal shampoo, conditioner and soap. Rinse completely.
☐ Step 2: Turn off the shower or step out of the bathwater.
☐ Step 3: Pour a small amount of liquid 4% CHG soap onto a wet, clean wash cloth and apply to your entire body FROM THE NECK DOWN (DO NOT use CHG on face, hair or genitalia).
☐ Step 4: Scrub with soap-filled washcloth over your entire body for 3 minutes, applying more soap as needed. Use approximately one ounce of soap with each shower.
☐ Step 5: Turn on the shower or return to the bath and rinse the liquid soap off your body.

24 Hours Before Surgery
- Do not apply lotions, powder, or deodorant to your body the day of surgery.
- Do not shave or remove any body hair below the neck (facial shaving is permitted).
Pain After Surgery...What to Expect

Here at Vail Valley Medical Center we strive to keep all patients as comfortable as possible regardless of the type of surgery or procedure.

Satisfactory pain control is one of our top priorities, which is why we offer a 24-hour Acute Pain Service including an acute pain team comprised of an anesthesiologist and nurse available to work with your surgical team and manage your pain around the clock.

Pain Control
By using multiple techniques, our goal is to keep your pain at a tolerable level. We do not expect that you will be pain-free immediately after or within the first 24-72 hours of surgery. However, we want to avoid pain that is rated at a 7 or higher. Our goal is to control your pain with medications and other interventions (such as proper positioning, ice and facilitating a relaxing environment) appropriate to your specific surgery and keep your pain at a tolerable level.

Medications
- Your surgeon will manage your home pain medication regimen.
- If possible, get the prescriptions filled before surgery, or as soon as your doctor provides them to you. This way, you will receive clear instructions on how and when to take your medications prior to leaving the hospital and you will have pain medications available for your ride home.
- For the first 1-3 days after surgery these medications should be taken routinely. This means doses should be taken at regular intervals and not skipped. This leads to optimal pain control.
- When you are ready to begin decreasing the amount of pain medication, start by taking only one tab of short-acting pain medication instead of two, or increasing the length of time between doses, such as 6 hours instead of 4. Over time, slowly decrease the amount of pain medications until you aren’t taking any at all.

Possible Problems or Side Effects
- **Constipation**— To prevent constipation while taking pain medication:
  - Increase fiber in your diet by eating fruits, vegetables, whole grains and beans. If you cannot get enough fiber from food, add a fiber supplement to your diet.
  - Drink enough water (8-10 glasses daily) and other non-alcoholic, non-caffeinated fluids to keep your urine clear or pale yellow in color.
  - Go to the bathroom when you have the urge to go. Do not hold it.
  - Take one of the following over-the-counter medications for as long as you are taking narcotic pain medication. Stop taking it if you develop diarrhea.
    - (Adult dosages)
      - Docusate 100mg by mouth two times a day
      - Senna one 17.2mg by mouth once a day
      - Miralax one 17g by mouth once a day

If you become constipated and have not had a bowel movement within two days, take one of the following over-the-counter medications until you resume a normal bowel regimen. Generally, suppositories and enemas work more quickly compared to pills. Stop taking if you develop diarrhea. (Adult dosages)
- Milk of Magnesia 30mL by mouth twice a day
- Mineral Oil 30 mL by mouth once a day
- Magnesium citrate 150mL by mouth once a day
- Bisacodyl 10mg rectally once a day
- Fleet Enema 133mL rectally once a day

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[Image of pain control and medication management]
Communicating Your Pain Level

It’s important for you to be able to describe your level of pain to your doctors and nurses. The 10-point pain scale is a standardized method that many healthcare organizations use to help patients communicate their pain level by turning the pain you are feeling into a numerical rating.

- **0**
  - Very happy, no pain
  - For most patients, a rating of 0-2 means they have no pain or very little pain.

- **1-2**
  - Hurts just a little bit

- **3-4**
  - Hurts a little more
  - A score of 3-6 indicates the pain is tolerable—you are able to sleep, eat and complete physical therapy.

- **5-6**
  - Hurts even more
  - A score of 3-6 indicates the pain is tolerable—you are able to sleep, eat and complete physical therapy.

- **7-8**
  - Hurts a whole lot
  - At 7 or higher it is important to inform staff members. It is beyond tolerable and will likely interrupt eating, sleeping, movement and will cause crying or moaning.

- **9-10**
  - Hurts as much as possible
Prevention of Deep Vein Thrombosis and Pulmonary Embolism

Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT) and Pulmonary Embolism (PE)
Anyone who is off their feet temporarily due to illness, surgery or injury may be at risk to develop a blood clot inside a vein. This condition is called Deep Vein Thrombosis, or DVT. A DVT usually occurs in the legs or pelvis, but it may also occur in other parts of the body. It may be caused by blood that pools or sits in a vein.

If a blood clot breaks loose and travels to the lung, it can be fatal. A blood clot in the lung is called a Pulmonary Embolism, or PE. A PE is a serious problem. Usually a PE can be treated if you get early care, but without treatment you could die. Complications from DVT kill more people than AIDS and breast cancer combined. If you or someone you love is going to be off their feet temporarily, educate yourself about the risks of DVT and be sure to talk to your doctor.

Knowing the Signs
Symptoms of DVT may include swelling, pain, tenderness, warmth or redness in the area of the clot, such as the calf or thigh. However, up to one-half of deep vein thromboses produce minimal symptoms or are completely “silent.”

Symptoms of PE may be trouble breathing or sudden chest pain that worsens with deep breathing. Other signs may be feeling faint or fainting, a fast heartbeat, or a fever. You may have a cough or cough up blood.

How do We Prevent a DVT or PE?
Based upon your risk factors for developing a blood clot, your doctor may prescribe several methods to prevent a blood clot, including early ambulation, use of special compression hose or stockings, intermittent pneumatic compression pumps or sequential compression devices and a blood thinner. Intermittent pneumatic compression devices (billed separately from the device company), compress the leg and/or foot and ankle and act as a pump to improve circulation in the lower extremities.

What are Blood Thinners?
Blood thinners are medications to help prevent clots and may be given in your IV or as an injection in your abdomen. Later they may be taken by mouth or continued as an injection. A type of blood thinner given as a shot is heparin. Coumadin® and Xarelto® are blood thinners taken by mouth.

Blood thinners may make it easier to bleed or bruise. If you are taking a blood thinner, you should:
- Watch for bleeding from your gums or nose, or in your urine or bowel movements.
- Tell your dentist and other caregivers before dental cleanings or other procedures that you are taking a blood-thinning medicine.
- Eat a high-fiber diet or take a stool softener medicine (with your doctor’s approval) to keep your bowel movements soft so you don’t strain.
- Use a soft toothbrush to brush your teeth.
- If you shave, use an electric razor.
- Avoid contact sports since you may bleed or bruise easier.

What Can I do to Prevent Blood Clots?
If you must rest in bed for an extended period of time, move your legs and bend your ankles often. You should also flex and extend your toes and ankles for a few minutes every hour while you are awake. Continue to wear the special compression stockings while in bed for an extended period of time or for as long as your doctor tells you. Don’t cross your ankles or legs for long periods of time. When you are sick or have surgery, start walking as soon as possible afterwards or when your doctor tells you. When you travel and are sitting for a long time, try to stand and walk every 1 to 2 hours. While you are sitting for a long time during travel, stretch your legs occasionally, do partial leg lifts, and flex and extend your ankles. Avoid alcohol while traveling and drink plenty of nonalcoholic liquids. Do not wear tight garments or shoes. If you are traveling a long distance, pack slippers or an extra pair of warm socks to keep your feet warm and allow the blood to circulate more freely.

Who Gets Deep Vein Thrombosis?
Most patients are over 60 years of age, however, DVT can occur in almost anyone. Genetics plays a part, but so does environment. There are some factors that may put a person at risk for developing DVT. The more factors a person has, the greater the risk. Some of these factors are listed below:
- Age greater than 40 (increasing with age)
- Cancer and chemotherapy
- Congestive heart failure (CHF)
- Immobilizing plaster cast
- Prior history of a blood clot
- Confined to bed
- Surgery or history of recent surgery
- Varicose veins
- Recent travel in automobile or airplane
- Hip, pelvis, or leg fracture
- Nephrotic syndrome
- Heart Attack
- Birth control pills or hormone replacement therapy (HRT)
- Certain inherited clotting disorders
- Chronic respiratory failure
- Family history of a blood clot
- Stroke
- Obesity
- Trauma
- Recent or current pregnancy
- Inflammatory bowel disease
- Central venous line access
- Infections
Everyone Has a Role in Making Healthcare Safe

That includes doctors, healthcare executives, nurses and healthcare technicians and YOU. By being an active, involved and informed member of your healthcare team, you play an important role in making your care safe. Research shows that patients who take part in decisions about their healthcare are more likely to have better outcomes.

The following are practical ways you can be an active participant in the safety of your care.

Speak Up
- If you have questions or concerns, speak up. If you don’t understand, ask again.
- Ask the doctor to initial the area that is to be operated upon, so that there’s no confusion in the operating room.
- If you think you are about to receive the wrong medication, tell the doctor or nurse about your concern.
- If you think the healthcare professional has confused you with another patient, tell them who you are and ask them to confirm your identity.

Pay Attention
- Tell your nurse or doctor if something doesn’t seem right.
- Expect healthcare workers to introduce themselves when they enter your room. If they don’t, ask them to. And look for their identification badges.
- Notice whether your caregivers have washed their hands. Hand washing is the most important way to prevent the spread of infections. Don’t be afraid to remind a doctor or nurse to do this.
- Know what time of day you normally receive a medication. If it doesn’t happen, bring this to the attention of your nurse or doctor.
- Make sure your nurse or doctor confirms your identity by checking your wristband or asking your name before he or she administers any medication or treatment.

Educate Yourself
- Ask all doctors treating you about the specialized training and experience that qualifies him or her to treat your illness.
- Gather information about your condition. Good sources include your doctor, your library, respected websites and support groups.
- Write down important facts your doctor tells you, so that you can look for additional information later. And ask your doctor if he or she has any written information you can keep.

Know Your Medications
- Thoroughly read all medical forms and make sure you understand them before you sign anything. If you don’t understand, ask your doctor or nurse to explain them.
- Make sure you are familiar with the operation of any equipment that is being used in your care. If you will be using oxygen at home, do not smoke or allow anyone to smoke near you while oxygen is in use.

Have an Advocate
- Your advocate can ask questions that you may not think of while you are under stress.
- Your advocate can also help remember answers to questions you have asked, and speak up for you if you cannot.
- Make sure this person understands your preferences for care and your wishes concerning resuscitation and life support.
- Review consents for treatment with your advocate before you sign them and make sure you both understand exactly what you are agreeing to.
- Make sure your advocate understands the type of care you will need when you get home and knows what to look for if your condition is getting worse and whom to call for help.

Speak Up
- If you have questions or concerns, speak up. If you don’t understand, ask again.
- Ask the doctor to initial the area that is to be operated upon, so that there’s no confusion in the operating room.
- If you think you are about to receive the wrong medication, tell the doctor or nurse about your concern.
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- Write down important facts your doctor tells you, so that you can look for additional information later. And ask your doctor if he or she has any written information you can keep.
What is Vail Valley Medical Center Doing to Make Surgery Safer?

Thank you for selecting Vail Valley Medical Center for your medical needs. Our healthcare professionals demonstrate their commitment to quality and safety by providing excellent care and services that meet the highest standards.

VVMC has impressively low infection rate.

- **Proper hand hygiene**: We wash our hands according to the Centers for Disease Control guidelines using soap and water or waterless alcohol hand sanitizer.
- **Verification**: We verify the correct procedure at every step in the surgical process -- from scheduling to the operating room.
- **Marking**: We mark the surgical site in the preoperative area.
- **Infection prevention**: We use measures to prevent infection such as clippers in place of razors, preventative antibiotic treatment prior to surgery and keeping patients warm prior to surgery to prevent infection.
- **Patient involvement**: We involve patients in planning and treatment from admission to home.
- **Rapid Response Team**: We have a Rapid Response Team to bring critical care expertise to the patient bedside if it is needed. Families can activate the team by dialing 4444 on any hospital bedside telephone.
- **Fall reduction**: Our Fall Reduction Program helps identify, prevent and educate patients and families at risk for falling.

Accessibility for Disabled Persons

Vail Valley Medical Center and all of its programs and activities are accessible to and usable by disabled persons, including persons who are deaf, hard of hearing, or blind, or who have other sensory impairments. Access features include:

- Convenient off-street parking designated specifically for disabled persons.
- Curb cuts and ramps between parking areas and buildings.
- Level access to first floor with elevator access to all other floors.
- Fully accessible offices, meeting rooms, bathrooms, public waiting areas, cafeteria, patient treatment areas, including examining rooms and patient wards.
- A full range of assistive and communication aids provided to persons who are deaf, hard of hearing, or blind, or with other sensory impairments. There is no additional charge for such aids. Some of these aids include:
  - Qualified sign language interpreters for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing.
  - Video-Relay Services.
  - A twenty-four hour (24) telecommunication device (TTY/TDD) which can connect the caller to all extensions within the facility and/or portable (TTY/TDD) units, for use by persons who are deaf, hard of hearing, or speech impaired.
  - Readers and taped material for the blind and large print materials for the visually impaired.
  - Assistive devices for persons with impaired manual skills.

If you require any of the aids listed above, please let the receptionist or your nurse know. You may also choose to directly contact the following outside organization:

**Rocky Mountain ADA Center**, 3630 Sinton Road, Suite 103, Colorado Springs, CO 80907; (719) 444-0268 (Voice/TTY);
http://adainformation.org/contact-us
We encourage you to be involved in the care you receive here at Vail Valley Medical Center. Please feel free to discuss any questions you may have with your healthcare team.

If you have unanswered questions or concerns related to your care or need help, please call our Patient & Family Help Line at (970) 477-5222. Please contact your surgeon if you have medical questions related to your surgery.

If you are not satisfied with the resolution provided by Vail Valley Medical Center, you may contact The Joint Commission, an organization that accredits and certifies healthcare organizations and programs, at (800) 994-6610.

Other Helpful Numbers
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services: (800) 633-4227 or (877) 486-2048 (TTY for Deaf/Hard of Hearing);
Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment: (303) 692-2827;
Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies (DORA): (303) 894-7855 or (800) 886-7675.

Manage Your Health Online
We offer a Patient Portal (www.vvmc.com/patientportal) that allows you to manage your health online. You can request an appointment, message your doctor, view or download lab results, and have 24-hour, secure, online access to select portions of your personal health information. (To request your full medical records, call (970) 569-7403.)

If you provide your email address to an admission representative during your visit to Vail Valley Medical Center you will receive an email with a link to “Accept Invitation to My VVMC Record.” Just follow the instructions to verify your identity and create an account.