

# CHECKLIST Early Planning

## At Least 1 to 3 Months Before Surgery

### Health Insurance

- Contact your **health insurance company**. Discuss your coverage.  
Some questions to ask:
  - Does the patient have **coverage** for services at Gillette?
  - To receive coverage for this care, is **prior authorization** required?
  - To receive coverage for planned care, do you need a **referral** from the patient's primary health care provider?
  - What coverage does the patient have for **surgery**? If the patient's surgery requires **rehabilitation** afterward, ask about **inpatient** rehabilitation—occurring during recovery in the hospital—and **outpatient** rehabilitation—therapy appointments at a clinic, after the patient goes home.
  
- Give Gillette your insurance policy information. Provide:
  - **Name** of your insurance company
  - **Policy number**
  - **Group number** (if you have one)
  
- For more information, call a Gillette **financial specialist** at 651-325-2177.

### Health Information

- Tell the patient's **primary health care provider** about the upcoming surgery.
  
- Schedule a **preoperative physical examination** with the patient's primary health care provider. The appointment must occur **one to 30 days** before surgery. The examination helps determine whether the patient is healthy enough to have the surgery. When you go, take the Health History and Physical Examination form you received in your preoperative packet. Ask the primary health care provider to fill out the form and **fax** it to Gillette at 651-726-2643. Also, bring copies of the completed form to Gillette on the day of the surgery.
  
- The surgeon might request some **lab tests** before the surgery. Look on the Health History and Physical Examination form to see what tests the patient needs. Schedule to have the patient's primary health care provider conduct the tests. Some lab work might need to be done no more than **seven days** before surgery. If requested lab tests aren't completed, surgery might be **canceled**. If there are questions, the patient's primary health care provider can call a Gillette preoperative nurse at 651-229-3918.
  
- Schedule and complete required presurgery appointments with health care providers in **other medical specialties**, such as cardiology, endocrinology, hematology and pulmonology.
  
- If the patient sees health care providers outside Gillette, send us copies of **records** from the most recent visits with those providers. We'd like to receive the records as soon as possible. You can ask providers to **fax** records to Gillette at 651-726-2643.
  
- If the patient has **medical conditions** that might affect **bleeding** or how the patient reacts to **anesthesia**, tell the surgeon as soon as possible.

### Medicines

- If the patient takes any medicines listed in your preoperative packet, call a preoperative nurse at 651-229-3918.
  
- Follow all recommendations from health care providers about any medicine changes the patient should make before the surgery.



### Keep Track of Your Tasks

Use the checklists on pages 9-16 to help you prepare for surgery, recovery, and care after leaving Gillette.



### Time Off School and Work

- ❑ If the patient is in **school**, meet with staff there about one month before surgery. Talk about the amount of time the patient will be out of school, and/or discuss any schedule changes the patient will require after returning to school. If the patient has a **special education evaluation report** and/or an **individualized education plan (IEP)**, ask for copies you can give Gillette (if you haven't already given them to us).
- ❑ The patient's health care team can help you determine how much time off **work** the patient and/or caregivers should take for the surgery and hospital stay. Remember: A **parent or legal guardian** must be available on the **day of surgery**—at Gillette or by phone—to give consent to the anesthesiologist and surgeon. If we can't reach a parent or legal guardian on the day of surgery, the procedure might be **anceled**. A legal guardian must show **proof-of-guardianship** paperwork to give consent. Please bring a copy of this paperwork so we can include it in the patient's record.
- ❑ Get **Family and Medical Leave (FMLA)** paperwork from employers. Send the paperwork to the surgeon's administrative assistant, who spoke with you when you scheduled the surgery.

### Care for Other Family Members

- ❑ Arrange care for other family members, including **siblings**, if necessary. At certain times—for example, during key discussions with the surgeon shortly before and after surgery, or while meeting with a nurse as you prepare to leave the hospital—it might be distracting to have siblings or others along. At other times during a hospital stay, you might want to bring siblings or others to visit with the patient. (See *Visiting Hours*, page 25.)

### Hospital Stay Preparation

- ❑ If you think it will be helpful, schedule a **hospital tour**. We'll help you become familiar with our building and services. During the tour, you might meet with a nurse, a social worker, a psychologist and/or a child life specialist to discuss:
  - Surgery, follow-up care, and related issues, such as anxiety before surgery and pain management
  - Discharge from the hospital and any home care, transportation and special equipment the patient will need after surgery
  - Resources and options for emotional and psychological support

For more information or to schedule a tour, call Patient Access at **651-325-2290**.

- ❑ During a hospital stay at Gillette, one parent or caregiver can stay overnight in the patient's hospital room. If family members or friends need **lodging** during the hospital stay, make reservations as soon as you can. The lodging list in your preoperative packet includes some hotels near Gillette that offer discounts to our patients' families. You can also find the list at [gillettechildrens.org/lodging](http://gillettechildrens.org/lodging).

### Transportation Home

- ❑ If you're flying to the Twin Cities for surgery, make **flight arrangements** with flexibility for the return flight date, if possible. Before you arrive, we estimate the length of stay the patient will need, but sometimes we adjust this estimate after surgery. If the patient will travel home in a cast, consider asking the airline about seating options. Bulkhead seating (in the first row behind first or business class) might offer more room.



- ❑ Arrange to leave the hospital in an **appropriate vehicle**. Surgery might require that the patient lie down in the vehicle during the trip home. If your family vehicle doesn't have enough space for that, arrange for use of another vehicle that will suit your needs. For some patients, special car seats are available to safely secure a child in a vehicle while reclined. We can help you obtain one if it's appropriate and safe for the patient.



### Care After Leaving the Hospital

- ❑ After surgery, the patient might need **follow-up appointments**. We might recommend that you schedule those appointments ahead of time, before the surgery.
  
- ❑ Some patients follow surgery with **outpatient therapy** appointments. If health care providers tell you the patient will need therapy after surgery, we recommend you explore options in your community before the patient has surgery. Check with your health insurance company to make sure you have coverage for services at the site you choose.
  
- ❑ If the patient will need any **medical equipment** (for example, a wheelchair or walker) for a while after leaving the hospital, we recommend making some arrangements before the surgery. Sometimes it takes a while to obtain items such as a child-size wheelchair. If you don't own or wish to buy a wheelchair, we can help you arrange to rent one from a local medical equipment vendor. If you don't live in the Twin Cities metropolitan area, your insurance policy might require that you rent medical equipment from a vendor closer to your home. Ask the patient's primary health care provider or community physical therapist to recommend resources near you.
  
- ❑ For more information about providing **care at home** after surgery, call Child and Family Services at **651-229-3855**. You can speak to a child life specialist and/or a social worker to discuss:
  - How **family and friends** can help you
  - How the patient's current **care facility** can best meet the patient's needs after surgery