

About Spine Surgery

Your Health Care Team

Your health care team includes:

- **surgeon** (will do the surgery)
- **physician assistants and nurse practitioners** (may help with the surgery, see you after surgery, answer your questions, and help with your prescription medicine questions and refill requests)
- **nurses and other support staff** (you can call them when you have questions about your care).

How To Prepare for Surgery

- Follow any education you receive before surgery.
- Schedule your pre-surgery education class or watch the pre-surgery video if your hospital does not offer the class.
 - Staff specialized in the care of the spine will be at the pre-surgery education class to answer your questions and help guide you through your surgery.
 - Please bring a member of your care circle (family member, friend or someone close to you) to this class. This person should also be available to act as a “coach” during your hospital stay and recovery.
 - At the pre-surgery education class you will learn:
 - how to get ready for surgery
 - what to expect during your hospital stay
 - how to go home safely after surgery.

- You may be given prescriptions that include:
 - a special soap-to use the day before and the morning of your surgery. This soap will help reduce the risk of infection.
 - a stool softener. Start taking this after surgery to prevent constipation.
 - vitamins. These will help your bones be strong.
- Plan to have a family member or friend help you when you return home after surgery.

What to Expect After Surgery

- Your follow-up visits will be scheduled with the physician assistant or nurse practitioner who helped with your surgery.
- During your hospital stay, you will receive options from United Hospital’s social services staff about either going home or to a transitional care facility.
 - If you return home and you have an issue with your health, your health care provider may recommend home health services.
 - Ask your a member of your health care team if you have questions about managing your care at home.

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What to Know About Pain Medicine

- A member of your health care team will talk with you about prescription pain medicine. You will learn how pain medicine may be used before and after surgery.
- After you leave the hospital, you will have a prescription for pain medicine.
- You will meet with a provider from your health care team about 2 weeks after surgery.
- Your progress will be closely checked during your recovery. Pain medicines are prescribed for a specific number of weeks that usually does not go over 3 months.
- If your pain continues after that time, you may need to see a pain management specialist.