



Before Your Amputation: Questions to Ask Your Surgeon

by Patricia J. Isenberg, MS, COO

Revised 2005

Talking with your surgeon prior to amputation is important. You should meet your surgeon, feel confident in his or her abilities, and have all of your concerns addressed *before* surgery is scheduled. Listed below are some questions we consider important. You may want answers to all of them or you might choose those most important to you. Your surgeon should be willing to take the time to answer any questions you have.

1. Is amputation the best solution?
2. What experience do you have in this type of surgery?
3. How long is the procedure?
4. What are the major risks of the surgery? What steps will you take to minimize those risks?
5. What kind of pain will I have after the surgery and for how long?
6. How will my pain be managed immediately following the surgery?
7. How will long-term pain be managed?
8. How long will I have to remain in bed?
9. Will I have drains? If so, when will they be removed?
10. How long will you supervise my care after surgery?
11. When will I be fitted with my first prosthesis?

12. Will I be able to meet with a prosthetist before the surgery?
13. Should I be able to use a prosthesis? How much functional ability will the prosthesis provide?
14. If I want to talk with someone who has been through a similar amputation, could you refer me?
15. Could you refer me to a support group?

Other Questions: For Your Nurse and Anesthesiologist

1. How long will I be in the recovery room?
2. When will I be able to visit with my family?
3. What kind of anesthesia will be used during surgery? What measures will be taken to reduce reactions to the anesthesia?
4. When will stitches be removed?

Remember: if you are uncertain or uncomfortable with the surgeon or the information you are given, ask for another opinion or a different surgeon.