



Remember that every person's lung cancer and treatment plan can vary. Consult with your doctor about your treatment plan and what you might expect.

What to expect before surgery

Before your surgery, your doctor might recommend you undergo certain lung function tests to make sure you are healthy enough for the procedure and also to help inform your surgeon. It is important to make sure you understand your insurance coverage, and any copay amounts that will be required. Your doctor will also tell you what to eat or drink during the 24 hours before the procedure, as well as what medications you should be taking. This is also a good time to arrange for help while you recover from surgery, including transportation to and from the hospital.

If you smoke, talk with your doctor about quitting smoking at least two weeks before surgery. Stopping smoking improves blood flow and speeds healing after surgery.

For more information about quitting smoking, visit [Lung.org/quit-smoking](https://www.lung.org/quit-smoking) or call our Lung HelpLine at 1-800-LUNGUSA.

What to expect during surgery

You will receive general anesthesia before surgery. The anesthesiologist will carefully monitor you during the operation. After you've been given anesthesia and are unconscious, the area of your body around the incision site may be shaved and cleaned to reduce the risk of infection.

Pre-treatment checklist:

- If you smoke, quit
- Understand insurance coverage
- Arrange for transportation to and from the hospital
- Set up help at home with chores and errands
- Make accommodations for time off work
- Find out what you can eat and drink before surgery
- Leave jewelry, valuables and contact lenses at home the day of surgery
- Wear loose, comfortable clothing
- Follow all instructions given to you by your doctor

Questions for your care team:

- What can I do to get ready for surgery?
- How long will I be in the hospital?
- Should I receive physical therapy or pulmonary rehabilitation after surgery?
- Who do I contact if I have any questions?

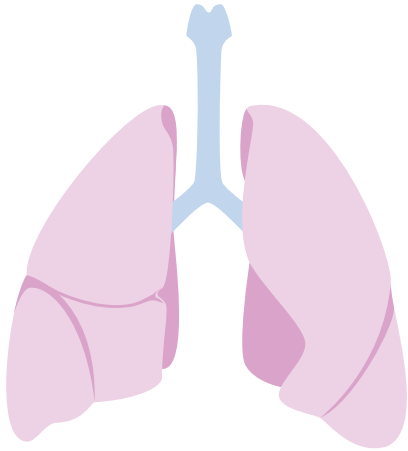
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Surgery Before, During, and After

A patient planning worksheet



List your own questions here:



Incentive Spirometer

There are two commonly used approaches to removing portions of the lung. The choice depends on the location, size and stage of the lung tumor and the expertise of the surgeon. A **thoracotomy**, is when surgery is performed through an incision, or cut, between the ribs at the side of the chest. **Minimally-invasive surgery** typically involves 1 to 4 small incisions to access the inside of the chest. The surgeon uses a camera to visualize the lung and special instruments to perform the surgery. This is known as thoracoscopy or video-assisted thoracoscopic surgery (VATS) and can also be done with the assistance of a surgical robot. Both of these types of surgery remove the diseased lung tissue. In some rare cases, the whole lung may be removed. Talk with your doctor about what type of surgery you will receive and what you can expect.

What to expect after surgery

After surgery, you will be moved to the recovery area and then eventually to your hospital room when you are stable. It is common to wake up experiencing grogginess and pain, and you will likely receive a combination of medications to help manage your pain. It is also common for you to have chest tubes inserted during surgery to help drain your chest cavity of fluid and blood, and these are usually removed after a few days. Some patients need to go home with the tube in place. Your healthcare team will teach you how to care for it at home.

A respiratory therapist may come in to help you with breathing treatments to improve your lung function after surgery. They may use medications, a spirometer, or both. Talk to your care team to determine when you can start walking. Before leaving the hospital your doctor or nurse will give you recovery instructions and may show you how to change your bandages. Ask your doctor about physical activity after surgery and be sure to schedule follow-up appointments.



Post-surgery checklist:

- Walk as soon as you can as advised by your care team
- Get recovery instructions from your doctor
- Ask your doctor about physical activity and if you need a referral to physical therapy or pulmonary rehab
- Communicate with your doctor about your level of pain or discomfort and if it is keeping you from taking a deep breath, coughing or moving.
- Call your doctor immediately if you have signs of complications



Physical therapy or pulmonary rehabilitation may become an important part of your recovery. It may help build strength and flexibility and some people are able to begin as early as the day after surgery. Ask your doctor for more information.

Once home, it is important to focus on recovery. Lean on your network of family, friends and community members to help with tasks like grocery shopping, cooking and cleaning. Talk to your doctor about what limits you might have and what types of activities you should be doing. After surgery you may notice shortness of breath with activity. Ask your doctor if you can expect this to improve with time or if it is expected to be permanent. It is very important that you tell your doctor if you have any pain or discomfort, physical or emotional. Palliative care, also known as supportive care, is available during every stage of treatment.

Call your doctor immediately if you experience any signs of complications.

For more information please visit Lung.org/lung-cancer or call our Lung HelpLine at 1-800-LUNGUSA