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Pre-Surgery Checklist

Everything to gather, buy, and set up before your surgery date

From Adam J. Cien, DO

Orthopaedic Surgeon • South Bend Orthopaedics

How to use this checklist

Start working through this list as soon as your surgery date is on the books. Most of it is small stuff, but small stuff adds up — and patients who walk into surgery day with everything ready have a much easier first two weeks at home.

I've organized it by **where things come from**: prescriptions from your pharmacy, recovery gear you'll gather on your own, and a few odds and ends from any drugstore. The last page covers what to do around the house before you leave for the hospital.

— *Dr. Cien*

From your pharmacy (we'll send these)

My office sends the following prescriptions to your pharmacy in the days leading up to surgery. You don't need to ask for them — but please **pick them up as soon as they're ready**, so you have everything in hand before surgery day.

- Mupirocin 2% nasal ointment** — start 5 days before surgery (see the Skin Prep handout).
- Pain medication** — filled but not opened until you're home.
- Blood-thinner** (usually aspirin or Eliquis) — start the day after surgery. See the Medication Guide.
- Anti-nausea medicine** — in case the pain medicine makes you queasy.

Have a question?

Pharmacy says they don't have a prescription on file? Send us a quick message through the patient portal — we'll re-send right away. Don't wait until the day before surgery to find out.

Recovery gear to have at home

A few pieces of recovery gear make the first two weeks much easier — an ice machine, compression stockings, a shower bench, a grabber, and a wedge pillow. You don't need every item; the ice machine and the compression stockings are the two I want everyone to have. Most of these are available at pharmacies, medical supply stores, or online.

★ Our SBO DME store

Our office has a durable medical equipment (DME) store that carries the **compression stockings** and an **ice therapy machine**. Ask about these at your pre-op appointment if you'd like to pick them up here — you're also welcome to buy them on your own.

The other items above are easy to find at any pharmacy, medical supply store, or online retailer — pick whichever is most convenient for you.

From any drugstore

A few small things to pick up separately. Any pharmacy or grocery store carries them.

- Hibiclens (chlorhexidine) soap** — one bottle is plenty. Used for the showers before surgery.
- Stool softener** (docusate / Colace) — pain pills and anesthesia both cause constipation. Start the day of surgery.
- Extra-strength Tylenol** — a backup, in case you want to alternate with prescription pain medicine.
- Lip balm and unscented lotion** — hospital air dries out skin and lips quickly.

Things you probably already have

Quick walk-through. Make sure these are clean, accessible, and ready.

- A firm chair with armrests — your recovery spot. Skip the soft recliners and low couches.
- Two or three pillows for elevating your leg above your heart.
- Loose, comfortable clothing — elastic waists, easy-on shirts.
- Comfortable shoes with backs (no flip-flops or backless slippers).
- A water bottle and phone charger within arm's reach of your recovery chair.
- A small notebook and pen, for tracking when you take pain medicine.
- Clean sheets on the bed for the night before surgery, plus clean pajamas.

Home setup, in the week before

- Walk through your house and pick up rugs that could slide.
- Route phone cords, lamp cords, and pet bowls out of your walking paths.
- Test the handrails on every set of stairs. If anything wiggles, fix it now.
- Set up your recovery chair with pillows, a side table, charger, and remote.
- Stock up on easy meals — soups, frozen entrées, sandwich fixings. Cooking is hard the first week.
- Line up rides for the first 2 to 3 weeks (no driving on narcotic pain medicine).
- Tell someone you trust they're your **point person** — the one we call if you can't answer.

How to reach my team

My team and I are here for you before, during, and after surgery. Here's how to get in touch — and when each option is the right one.

Two quick notes on reaching us. **Whenever possible, send us a message through the patient portal** — it almost always gets a faster response than a phone call, because the message lands directly with the right person on my team. If you do need to call, please give us one to two business days to get back to you, and please leave just one message. Calling repeatedly slows our response down for everyone, including you.

PATIENT PORTAL	CALL	AFTER HOURS
sbortho.com Our preferred channel. Messages, results, records — usually the fastest response.	574-247-5164 Routine questions, scheduling, refills. Please allow 1–2 business days for a callback.	Call 574-247-9441 Routes urgent calls to the on-call provider when the office is closed.

★ When to go to the ER (don't wait for a callback)

- Chest pain, trouble breathing, or sudden weakness on one side of the body.
- Severe leg pain or swelling that came on suddenly (possible blood clot).
- A fall after surgery, especially if your new joint feels different afterward.
- Fever over 101°F that lasts more than 24 hours, or fast-spreading redness around your incision.

We'd rather hear from you twice than miss a real concern.