

Patient Pre-Surgery Question Guide

A discussion guide to assess necessity, risk, alternatives and evidence before agreeing to surgery.

1. Necessity & Purpose

- What is the exact goal of this surgery?
What problem is it supposed to resolve or improve?
 - Will it eliminate the cause of the issue or just manage symptoms?
 - What are the chances that I will feel noticeably better as a direct result of this surgery?
Based on your patients, not general statistics.
 - Are there published studies showing that this surgery reliably improves outcomes for people like me (considering my age, sex, health history, severity)?
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2. Evidence & Outcome Data

- How many of these surgeries have you personally performed?
- What percentage of your patients report meaningful improvement within 3, 6, and 12 months post-op?
- How many of your patients do not improve, or feel worse after this surgery?
- Do you follow up with your patients long-term (1–3 years)? What do you see over time?

- Can you show me published data or independent reviews that show long-term benefit for this procedure?

Not industry-funded summaries, actual outcome data.

3. Risks & Worst-Case Outcomes

- What are the most common complications immediately after surgery?
 - What are the rare but most serious risks? (e.g., nerve damage, infection, permanent loss of function)
 - Have any of your patients experienced long-term harm or disability as a result of this procedure?
 - What is the worst-case scenario for me specifically, given my health history?
 - If complications occur, what would the treatment plan be—and would they be reversible?
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4. Alternatives & Conservative Options

- What are the non-surgical alternatives to this procedure?
- Have you had patients who chose not to do the surgery and improved anyway?
- Is there a chance that lifestyle, structural rehab, fasting, or non-invasive therapies could resolve this problem without surgery?
- Would you support me trying alternative therapies for 3–6 months first before reassessing?
- If I delay the surgery, is there any real harm or risk of worsening in the meantime?

5. Personalization & Logic

- Why do you feel the benefits of this procedure outweigh the risks in *my* case specifically?
- How will you tailor the surgical approach to my anatomy, condition severity, and healing capacity?
- Do I have any biological predispositions (age, blood sugar, immune condition) that increase risk of complications or delayed healing?
- Can we conduct any pre-op testing (e.g., nutritional markers, inflammatory panels, imaging) to ensure I'm optimized for recovery?

6. Post-Surgical Recovery

- What is the average healing time before patients return to full function?
 - What does rehab look like, and how long is it required?
 - What percentage of patients require additional surgeries down the line?
 - If pain or dysfunction returns later, what would be the next steps?
 - Do you provide a personalized post-op plan, or is it standard for everyone?
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7. Financial Considerations

- What is the full financial cost of this procedure (surgery, hospital, anesthesia, post-op)?
 - Will insurance cover everything? Are there surprise costs or out-of-pocket rehab needs?
 - If something goes wrong, am I financially liable for corrective surgeries or extended care?
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8. Doctor Transparency & Experience

- How many years have you been performing this specific procedure?
 - What changes or improvements have you made in your surgical technique over time?
 - Would you recommend this surgery to your own family member in my exact situation?
 - Do you or your practice receive any financial incentives from the hospital or device manufacturers related to this procedure?
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Final Key Question:

“If I choose *not* to do this surgery, what will likely happen over the next 3, 6, or 12 months—and what are the chances I’ll improve on my own?”

Do Not Feel Pressured To Answer Immediately:

“I’d like a few days to reflect, review the data, and look at alternatives before I decide. Can I follow up with you after doing that?”

Tips:

- Take notes during the discussion or ask to record (with consent)
- Ask for studies and review them at home
- If you feel pressured, rushed, or discouraged from asking questions, that's a red flag
- Consider a second opinion if any doubt remains