

Questions to Ask Your Doctor to Support Your Valve Surgery Journey



Heart Valve Voice US

Preparing for valve surgery can feel overwhelming, but asking the right questions can help you feel informed, empowered, and ready for what's ahead. Use this guide to start the conversation with your healthcare team to make sure you understand each step of the process.

Pre-Surgery Questions: Understanding Your Diagnosis and Treatment Options

Before your surgery, it's important to learn about the valve disease you have and the best treatment approach for you. Consider asking your doctor the following questions:

- ☐ What type of surgery am I a candidate for based on my valve disease diagnosis?

- ☐ What are the advantages and disadvantages of open-heart surgery versus other minimally invasive techniques like TAVR?

- ☐ Based on the current state of my valves, how quickly should my valve be repaired or replaced?

- ☐ How long do you expect I will need to stay in the hospital?

- ☐ Is there a surgical liaison or designated valve coordinator I can contact for additional questions?

Post-Surgery Questions: What to Expect After Your Surgery

Understanding what recovery looks like can help you prepare mentally and physically. Here are some helpful questions to ask your care team:

- ☐ What is the typical recovery time after surgery?

- ☐ When can I expect my symptoms to improve? Will I still have palpitations, fatigue, and other symptoms that I had before my surgery?

- ☐ Will I need to take medications after surgery? If yes, for how long?

- ☐ Am I at risk for infection? What can I do to lower my risk?

- ☐ What signs or symptoms should I be aware of that might require immediate medical attention?

Lifestyle Adjustments: Preparing for Daily Life After Surgery

Your daily habits may need to change as you heal and beyond. Don't hesitate to ask:

- ☐ Should I follow a special diet during recovery?

- ☐ Will sneezing, coughing, or other everyday functions affect my recovery?

- ☐ How active should I be after surgery? When can I return to regular activities?

- ☐ Is there anything I should prepare in advance to help make recovery smoother?

- ☐ Will I need to make any lifelong changes to protect my heart valves?

Support During Recovery: Finding Help and Staying Connected

Recovery is not something you have to go through alone. Talk to your healthcare team about:

- ☐ Does the hospital offer support groups or counseling services for patients recovering from valve surgery?

- ☐ Are there mental health services or telehealth options available if I have questions?

- ☐ Can you connect my family or caregivers with information so they can better help me?

- ☐ Can you recommend any patient communities or online groups for people living with heart valve disease?

- ☐ Is cardiac rehabilitation an option for me? If so, how can I get started?

Bring this resource to your next appointment and write down the answers as you go.

It can help ease your mind and ensure you leave with the clarity and confidence you need.

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