You may not be able to eat or drink for a certain period of time before the surgery. It is important to follow the instructions about eating and drinking. If you don’t, your surgery may need to be rescheduled.

You may also be asked to have supplies on hand for taking care of your wounds after surgery. Supplies might include antiseptic ointment and bandages.

**During Surgery**

Once you are under anesthesia, the surgeon removes the cancer, usually along with some healthy tissue around it. Removing this healthy tissue helps improve the chances that all the cancer has been removed.

Sometimes, the surgeon might also remove lymph nodes or other tissues near the tumor. These tissues will be checked under a microscope to see if the cancer has spread. Knowing if the nearby tissue contains cancer will help your doctors suggest the best treatment plan for you after surgery.

**After Surgery**

Once you are ready to go home after surgery, the nurse will tell you how to take care of yourself. He or she will explain:

- How to control pain
- Activities you should and should not do
- How to take care of your wound
- How to spot signs of infection and steps to take if you do
- When you can return to work

You will have at least one more visit with the surgeon a week or two after you go home. For more complex surgeries, you may need to see the surgeon more often. You may have stitches removed, and the surgeon will check to make sure you are healing as you should.

**Special Diet Needs before and after Surgery**

Surgery increases your need for good nutrition. If you are weak or underweight, you may need to eat a high-protein, high-calorie diet before surgery.

Some types of surgery may change how your body uses food. Surgery can also affect eating if you have surgery of the mouth, stomach, intestines, or throat. If you have trouble eating after surgery, you may be given nutrients through a feeding tube or IV (through a needle directly into a vein).

Talk with a dietitian for help with eating problems caused by surgery. For more information about coping with eating problems see the booklet Eating Hints.