

QualityCounts™ For Employees – June 2010

Tips When Choosing Same-Day or Outpatient Surgery

Over 15 million Americans have surgery every year. The majority of operations are not emergencies and thus are regarded as elective. Elective surgery means you have time to educate yourself about the proposed operation and be sure it is the best treatment option for you.

You also have time to work with your surgeon to make the surgery as safe as possible.

Advancements in medical technologies have made many surgeries that once required a hospital stay to be performed as a same-day or outpatient surgery. This means the surgery is done in a way that lets patients return home the same day. These outpatient procedures, done in a doctor's office, a special surgical center or a day surgery unit of a hospital, are less expensive because they do not require an overnight stay in a hospital room.

The *QualityCounts™* Outpatient Procedures and Tests report can help you learn more about costs for common outpatient procedures and tests at facilities that belong to The Alliance network. To access the report, visit <http://the-alliance.org/qualitycounts.aspx>

While these same-day surgeries provide convenience, they also create additional planning. To increase your chances for a smooth recovery, it is important to ask the right questions before the surgery, and know the instructions for after the surgery.

Some vital questions to ask before surgery include:

- What operation are you recommending?
- Why do I need the operation?
- Are there alternatives to surgery?
- What are the benefits of having the operation?
- What are the risks of having the operation?
- What will happen if I don't have this operation?
- Is this procedure covered by my benefit plan?
- Where can I get a second opinion?
- What has been your experience in doing this operation? How many have you performed?
- Where will the operation be done?
- Is the facility or provider covered by my benefit plan?
- What kind of anesthesia will I need?
- How long will it take me to recover?

Receiving quality care involves being active in your health care experience. Being prepared can help you pursue the safest options, reduce your health care costs and ensure a smooth recovery.

For more information:

<http://www.ahrq.gov/consumer/surgery/surgery.htm>

<http://www.ahrq.gov/consumer/quicktips/tipsurgery.htm>