

PREPARING FOR SUCCESSFUL SURGERY

If you are going to have surgery, you may feel a little afraid or worried. Remember, you are taking an important step in your health and healing.

When patients relax to get ready for surgery they can be more comfortable and calm. They may get better faster and stay in the hospital for less time. Using *Preparing for Successful Surgery*, Kaiser Permanente's guided imagery CD or podcast, can help you do this.

GUIDED IMAGERY

Guided imagery is a gentle but powerful way to positively guide your mind. It helps you have a more positive surgery experience. You use all of your senses (sight, touch, smell, taste, and sound) to create positive images. Almost anyone can do it.

Guided imagery works because you relax your mind and body. This helps you feel more in control.

1. Mind/Body connection: Your thoughts, feelings, and moods have a big effect on your health. To the body, images created in the mind can be almost like real events. The body does not know the difference. This is the mind/body connection.

- 2. Relaxation:** Listening to music and a calming voice relaxes your mind and body. This will help you create healing images that can speed your recovery.
- 3. Sense of control:** Feeling in control can lead to a positive outlook and help you feel better.

Create a relaxed state of mind by using the mind-body connection, relaxation, and control. The body sees these qualities as real and helps prepare you for a quicker recovery.

AFFIRMATIONS

Affirmations are short statements that help you feel more in control. They give your body specific healing instructions. They help you focus on positive expectations, such as decreased discomfort, shorter healing time, and less pain. Here are some examples of affirmations:

- ❖ *I have little discomfort.*
- ❖ *I am confident that things will be fine.*
- ❖ *I am focusing on my own inner peace.*
- ❖ *I am recovering quickly and easily.*

Try the affirmations on the CD or podcast or come up with your own. They will relax you during surgery and lower physical and mental stress.

TIPS FOR USING THE CD

Find a place to sit or lie down quietly for 20 to 40 minutes. Get comfortable, but not enough to fall asleep. It is best to listen to the guided imagery with headphones, if possible, and in a relaxed atmosphere. Don't worry about doing things perfectly. The more you listen, the easier it will be to relax and calm your mind.

Play the CD or podcast and allow yourself to follow the suggestions you hear.

- Listen to track 1 (*Introduction to Guided Imagery*) once.
- Then, listen to track 2 (*Imagery for Surgery*) and track 3 (*Affirmations*) twice a day on each of the days leading up to your surgery.
- After surgery, listen to track 3 (*Affirmations*) and track 4 (*Imagery for Healing*) twice a day, every day, until you feel better. It might take several days or weeks.
- Track 5 has relaxing music that can help you relax and sleep. Listen to track 5 as much as you want during the days before and after your surgery. You may want to listen to track 5 on headphones during your surgery. Be sure to ask your care team ahead of time.

“Relaxation, imagery, and affirmations have been shown to decrease pain and use of pain medications after surgery, as well as speed recovery.”

—Dr. Harley Goldberg, Director,
Complementary & Alternative Medicine

IMAGERY RESULTS

Research shows that patients using imagery may be able to leave the hospital and return home more quickly than those who do not use imagery. They may have less discomfort and feel more relaxed.

For example, in one study, 130 patients who were scheduled for surgery were divided into two groups. Group 1 did not use the CD. Group 2 listened to the *Preparing for Successful Surgery* CD for three days before and for six days after surgery.

The group that listened to the CD said that they had less discomfort and used less pain medicine after surgery. In fact, those who listened to the imagery CD had less pain on the first day after surgery than the other group felt on the sixth day after surgery.

"I was wondering how this CD would help me heal. I was surprised at how relaxed it made me feel. Because of this program, I had little pain and a successful surgery."

– Kaiser Permanente surgery patient

This information is not intended to diagnose health problems or to take the place of medical advice or care you receive from your physician or other health care professional. If you have persistent health problems, or if you have additional questions, please consult with your doctor.

AT THE HOSPITAL

You can listen to the CD while waiting for surgery and, depending on the operation, in the recovery room after surgery. If you need a CD player, ask your doctor, nurse, or a friend if you can borrow one. Ask your doctor or nurse if you can play the CD during surgery, too.

After your surgery, listen to the CD twice a day until you feel better. Ask a friend or family member to help you if you need them to.

SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Getting support from others can make you more comfortable before, during, and after surgery. Ask a close friend or family member to come with you or visit you. Talk to your doctors and nurses. Ask questions. We are here to help you prepare for and recover from your surgery.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Check your *Kaiser Permanente Healthwise Handbook*.
- Visit your physician's Home Page at kp.org/mydoctor.
- Visit our Web site at kp.org where you can search "mind body health," or find available podcasts at kp.org/listen.

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A program of guided imagery, affirmations, and music to create a sense of control and speed recovery

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