



MASSACHUSETTS
GENERAL HOSPITAL

CORRIGAN MINEHAN
HEART CENTER

Your Heart Surgery: What You Need to Know

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Welcome to the Massachusetts General Hospital Cardiac Surgical Service

We are committed to giving you the best medical care. It's important that you and your loved ones know what to expect before, during and after your surgery. The information in this guide will help prepare you. We will give you more information during your time with us. Please let us know if you have any questions.

Your Care Team

As the patient, you are the most important part of your care team.

Other members of your care team for your upcoming heart surgery are listed below.

You may refer to the **Patient Information Guide for Massachusetts General Hospital**, which describes many of these team members in more detail.

Members of Your Care Team

- Cardiac Surgeon
- Cardiologist
- Anesthesiologist
- Intensivist
- Surgical Resident
- Surgical Fellow
- Physician Assistant
- Nursing Director
- Nurse Practitioner
- Attending Registered Nurse
- Clinical Nurse Specialist
- Registered Nurse
- Administrative Assistants
- Patient Care Associates
- Case Managers
- Physical Therapist
- Respiratory Therapist
- Occupational Therapist
- Dietician
- Tobacco Treatment Services
- Chaplain
- Social Worker

Before Your Surgery

Your Visit to the Pre-Admission Testing Area (PATA)

You will need to come to Mass General to have tests done before your surgery. We call this pre-admission testing. We will schedule you to come in for this testing one to two weeks before your surgery.

Before the day of your testing, visit the website www.massgeneral.org/omp and click on One Medical Passport to fill out the information form.

If you can't get online with a computer or other electronic device, you can provide this same information when the nurse from pre-admission calls you. If you fill out the form on One Medical Passport, the nurse will call you to go over your information and to answer your questions and this call will take less time.

The Admitting Office will also call you before your PATA visit. This office will talk to you about your health insurance and tell you anything else you need to do.

Day of Your PATA Visit

The testing may take several hours. Please plan on spending most of this day at Mass General. We will try to finish all testing and teaching as soon as we can.

What to expect: testing required

Here is a list of the tests you will have during your pre-admission testing. If you need to have additional tests, you will be given directions before your PATA visit.

Pre-Admit Test Area (PATA) Jackson Building, Room 121

- Blood draw
- Urine sample
- EKG
- Nasal swab

Wang Building, Room 290

- Chest X-ray

Cox Building, 6th floor, Suite 630

- Interview and complete physical examination
- Anesthesia evaluation

Touring the Hospital Before the Day of Your Surgery

You may choose to take a brief tour of the two units you will stay in following your surgery: the Cardiac Surgical Intensive Care Unit (CSICU) and Step-down Unit. Request this upon your arrival and we will schedule this for you on the same day as your PATA visit, either between testing or at the end of the day.

New Health Problems and Medications

You should try to stay away from people who are sick as it gets closer to your surgery date.

Doing this will help you to avoid having the date of your surgery delayed.

If you do have any new health problems, let your provider know as soon as possible. Your provider may want to examine you and treat any problems early so your surgery is not delayed. Some problems may be:

- Fever
- Sore throat
- A cold
- The flu
- Trouble or burning when urinating
- You have been started on an antibiotic

Your provider will give you directions for taking your regular medications.

Last Days Preparing for Surgery

To lower your chance of infection after your surgery, you will need to take special steps with bathing the days leading up to your surgery.

The nasal swab test you had during your PATA visit tests for Staph (*Staphylococcus aureus*). Staph is a germ (bacteria) that lives in the nose and on the skin and many people who have it don't get an infection. However if you do have Staph, there are extra steps you will need to take to lower your chance of getting an infection after your surgery. If you do have Staph, your surgeon's office will call you to review the instructions on a separate handout you receive during your PATA visit, **Your Nose and Body Wash Instructions** that will give you the full directions you need.

If your test results were positive

Shower with Hibiclens® soap

- Use Hibiclens® soap once a day for 5 days.
- Start using it 4 days before your surgery and include the day of your surgery.

Nose medicine (mupirocin)

- Use this medicine for 5 days, including the day of your surgery.

OR

If your test results were negative

- Use Hibiclens® soap once a day for 3 days.
- Start using it 2 days before your surgery and include the day of your surgery.

Smoking and Tobacco Use

If you smoked or used tobacco before you stopped to prepare for your heart surgery, it will be important to plan ahead for your cravings and withdrawals you may have in the hospital. Mass General's Tobacco Treatment Services (TTS) will be available to help while you are in the hospital after your surgery. Your care team can arrange for a TTS counselor to visit you as needed.

Staying smoke-free is the single most important thing you can do for keeping your heart healthy. Having quit for surgery will be a great opportunity to stay smoke-free once you leave Mass General. For more information, see our Helpful Resources page near the end of this guide.

Choosing Loved Ones to Go to Mass General with You

As the patient, only you or your health care agent (proxy) can choose who can visit you once you are in the Cardiac Surgery ICU (CSICU), or receive updates about your surgery, or both. Before your surgery, let your care team know any specific wishes you have for people who can and cannot visit you.

Choose a Spokesperson

Choose one of your loved ones as the one person (spokesperson) who will talk to your Surgeon directly. This spokesperson will act as a liaison between your care team and your other loved ones to provide updates once your surgery is over.

The surgery schedule sometimes has to change at short notice. If this happens, the date or time of your surgery may change. We will let you know as soon as possible if any changes have to be made.

The Day Before Surgery

Continue to follow the directions you received for lowering your chance of having an infection after surgery.

Follow the medication directions your provider gave you during your PATA visit.

The evening before your surgery, you can eat a normal meal. Don't, however, eat, drink, or chew anything after 10 P.M. This includes gum, mints, water, and so on.

The Day of Surgery

Preparing Before You Arrive

Bathing and Other Hygiene

Continue to not drink or eat anything, including chewing on gum or mints. **Be sure to not swallow water when brushing your teeth in the morning.**

Your final antiseptic shower will be on the day of surgery. You will need to leave your skin clean from any other body products.

- Don't use contact lenses, makeup, nail polish, powder, lotion, deodorant or hair products
- Don't wear any facial or body piercings
- Remove any existing nail polish and artificial (acrylic) nails
- You may remove facial hair
- Don't shave the area of your body where your surgery will be done. The operating room staff will do this.

What to Bring and Leave at Home

You will want to only bring the items needed for your surgery. Leave all of your valuables at home for safe keeping.

Bring these items to Mass General

- ✓ The legal ID used to schedule surgery — a copy of it rather than the original ID itself is preferred
- ✓ Eye glasses
- ✓ Hearing aids
- ✓ Dentures
- ✓ CPAP machine

Leave these items at home

- ✗ Prosthetic devices
- ✗ Watches
- ✗ Electronics
- ✗ Money
- ✗ Jewelry
- ✗ Makeup
- ✗ Contact lenses

Where to Check In

You will check in at the Center for Perioperative Care (CPC) on the third floor of the Wang Building.

After checking in, you will wait with your loved ones in the CPC. Clinicians will remove hair from your chest with electric clippers and use antibacterial cloths on your skin. You will also get an antibacterial mouthwash to swish in your mouth and spit out.

Your loved ones may stay with you until you go to the operating room (OR).

Your care team will take you to the OR area about one to two hours before your surgery starts.

Your Time in the Operating Room (OR)

What You Need to Know

Before your surgery begins, your care team will need to prepare you further.

What to Expect: Preparation in the OR for Your Surgery

- Your anesthesiologist will place a small flexible tube known as an **intravenous catheter** (IV) into a vein in your hand or arm and provide gentle sedation to make you feel more relaxed.
- Next, your surgical team will place an **arterial line** into one of the arteries in your wrist or upper arm after we have numbed the area with medicine.
- Medicine will then go through the IV that will make you fall asleep.

What Your Loved Ones Need to Know

- Your loved ones can refer to a handout/card that says where they can wait based on when your surgery is expected to be done. Your Surgeon will call the spokesperson that you have chosen to give updates and answer questions.
- If your loved ones want to wait at Mass General during your surgery, they should stay in the Gray Surgical Family Waiting Area. This is located on the first floor of the Gray Building in the back lobby of the hospital. The Gray Family Waiting Room staff will assist your loved ones in tracking your location during and after surgery.
- If your surgery goes past 8:30 P.M., your loved ones will wait in the Blake 8 Family Lounge located in the Cardiac Surgery Intensive Care Unit (CSICU). This is located on the eighth floor of the Blake Building. Make sure they tell the staff of the CSICU when they arrive by using the intercom system in the Blake 8 Family Lounge.

After Your Surgery

The Attending Registered Nurse (ARN) will help coordinate your stay after your surgery. The ARN will be available to help with your needs.

Your Time in the Cardiac Surgery Intensive Care Unit (CSICU)

After surgery, you will go to the Cardiac Surgery Intensive Care Unit (CSICU) located on Blake 8 (the eighth floor of the Blake Building). The CSICU is a special unit designed for patients who have had heart surgery.

Your care team will move you from the operating room (OR) to the CSICU (Blake 8). After it is safe to do so, your team will move you to the Step-Down Unit (Ellison 8).

What You Need to Know

What to Expect: Equipment in Your CSICU Room

When you first wake up, it may take some time for you to understand what is going on. This is normal and your nurse will stay and talk with you.

You will have tubes attached to you and you will be connected to machines. You may not be able to use your hands when you first wake up. For your protection, we may bind your hands to your bed for a short period until you are fully awake and aware of your surroundings again. This will keep you from pulling tubes that are attached to you.

The following page has a description of all of the tubes and machines you can expect to see in your room.

Having Your Blood Sugar Level Checked
Your care team including Registered Nurses will check your blood sugar for two to three days after your surgery. You may need insulin injections, even if you don't have diabetes. This is only for a short time and will help you heal your best.

Your Diet

At first, you will only drink clear liquids, like apple juice, and eat broth and gelatin snacks (Jell-O®).

If you are able to digest these foods and drinks without a problem, you can then start a low-fat, low-salt (low-sodium) diet that your care team will give you.

- You can only have a certain amount of liquids (about six cups) each day until you are back to within two pounds of your weight before surgery.

You may not feel like eating for the first few days after surgery. This is normal and over time it will get better.

- You should try to eat something at each meal but don't force yourself.
- Any of your loved ones who wish to visit you must first check with your Registered Nurse **before** bringing you any liquids or foods.

Different Equipment in your CSICU Room

Endotracheal Tube (breathing tube): A breathing tube placed into your mouth and down into your windpipe. The tube is then connected to a breathing machine (ventilator). This machine breathes for you while you are asleep. You will not be able to talk with a breathing tube, but you can nod “yes” or “no.” The breathing tube will be removed as soon as you are fully awake and able to breathe without the help of the ventilator. After the tube is removed, you may have some soreness in your throat that usually goes away in about one to two days.

Intravenous (IV): A small, soft tube (catheter) that is placed into a vein in your hand, arm, or neck. We use this to give fluid or medication into the blood stream. You will probably have more than one.

Cardiac Monitor: Sticky pads on your chest attach to wires that lead to this monitor that looks like a television screen. This equipment monitors your heart rate and heart rhythm. It is like having an EKG all the time.

Chest (Drainage) Tubes: We place many tubes in your chest during surgery called Blake drains or chest or drainage tubes. They are used to remove drainage (air or fluid from around the lungs) to allow your lungs to work more fully. The tubes drain into a large plastic container near the foot of your bed. We will remove them when you don't have a lot of drainage. This is usually in one to three days, but the range can be longer.

Foley (Urinary) Catheter: A small soft tube (catheter) that is placed into your bladder and exits your body. It is attached to a bag that collects urine. When you have this catheter, it is common to feel the urge to urinate. We remove it within the first couple of days after your surgery.

Temporary Pacemaker Wires: Thin wires that are placed onto the surface of your heart during surgery. The ends of the wires come up through the skin and can be attached to a pacemaker, if needed. These temporary wires are easily removed when you no longer need them, usually three days after surgery.

Preventing and Treating Constipation

Constipation is when you have difficulty passing stool. This can be common while staying at a hospital and can be caused by many things. A laxative or stool softener can help relieve your constipation. If these medications don't help, your care team can also give you an enema.

Constipation is not serious and will get better once you are moving, eating and drinking better.

Pain or Discomfort You May Have After Your Surgery

It is normal to have some pain after heart surgery. We want to make sure you are as comfortable as possible. Let us know as soon as you have discomfort, or if you feel your pain medicine isn't working.

Some patients are worried about becoming addicted to pain medicines. You will only be taking the pain medication for a short period of time, so addiction should not become a problem.

Medications

Your doctor may prescribe medications for you after your surgery. You may get medicine to:

- Keep your heartbeat regular
- Thin your blood (prevent unwanted clots)
- Get rid of the extra fluid in your body
- Control any nausea (upset stomach) you may have

Smoking and Tobacco Use

If you smoked before you stopped to prepare for your heart surgery, Mass General's Tobacco Treatment Services (TTS) will be available to help while you are at Mass General after your surgery. Your care team can arrange for a TTS counselor to visit you as needed.

What Your Loved Ones Need to Know

Calling for Updates

The spokesperson chosen can call into the CSICU at 617 724-4410 anytime to talk to your nurse, and can tell this information to your other loved ones.

Visiting

Your loved ones may visit you in the CSICU. Your loved ones will need to call into the unit each time before visiting. We may ask your loved ones to go to the waiting area or step out of the unit when we are providing care

- Please have loved ones check with your nurse about bringing in food or liquids.
- We do not allow flowers in the CSICU
- For other gifts, please have your loved ones first check with your nurse

Quiet Hours

The CSICU has also set Quiet Hours to ensure that all patients get enough rest for a full recovery. During these times you and your loved ones are encouraged to speak quietly and put cell phones on vibrate mode. During these hours, the CSICU lights will be dimmer as a reminder and doors may be shut. These times are:

Quiet Hours for CSICU

2:00 P.M. - 4:00 P.M.

11:00 P.M. - 5:00 A.M.

Wi-Fi

We provide free Wi-Fi for visitors of our patients. No password is required to access this network.

The network name is phspiaguest.

Available Services

The Patient Information Guide provides a full list of services your loved ones may find useful during their visits, such as cafeteria and gift shop locations and hours.

Your Time in the Cardiac Step-Down Unit

Once you are on your way to recovery, you will be moved to Ellison 8 (eighth floor of the Ellison Building). All of these rooms are semi-private.

Quiet Hours for Cardiac Step-Down Unit

1:30 P.M. - 3:30 P.M.

Midnight - 6:00 A.M.

What You Need to Know

Patient Care Pathway

We will give you a written plan of care called the Patient Care Pathway. The Pathway tells you what to expect each day while you are in the Step-Down Unit for things like your physical activity, diet, medications, and having blood tests, EKGs, and X-rays taken.

Having Your Blood Pressure, Heart Rate, and Breathing Levels Checked

During the first 24 hours in the Step-Down Unit, your Registered Nurse will check your blood pressure, heart rate and breathing every 2 hours. After this first day, your Registered Nurse will check these every 4 hours.

Other Visits from Your Care Team

A Physician Assistant or Nurse Practitioner who is part of your care team will see you each day. Your Attending Nurse will work with your care team to coordinate your stay and answer any questions.

What Your Loved Ones Need to Know

Unlike the CSICU, your loved ones are allowed to visit you at anytime without first calling the Step-Down Unit. Overnight guests, however, are not allowed. Please remember that all rooms are semi-private and your loved ones should respect other patients' privacy.

Quiet Hours

Like the CSICU, the Step-Down Unit has Quiet Hours in place.

Leaving Mass General

Your care team will all work together to create a plan for your care when you go home.

Your Case Manager

You will work with your Case Manager of your care team once you are in the Step-Down Unit who will talk to you about leaving the hospital. If you have any questions or concerns about caring for yourself after you go home, let your Case Manager know.

Inpatient Rehabilitation Facilities

You may need to go to an inpatient rehabilitation facility for a short time before returning home. If you do, your Case Manager will give you a list of places to choose from. Your loved ones may visit these places before making a final decision.

Smoking and Using Tobacco

If you smoked or used tobacco before your surgery, the best thing you can do to keep your heart healthy is to stay smoke-free! Yet quitting smoking can be very difficult. Consider using medicines like nicotine patches, lozenges, or gum, or even a combination of these. Using these can double your chances of quitting for good. The MASS Quitline has counselors that can help you. Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW.

Before You Leave

Your care team will make sure you have done what you need to do before discharge. Your care team will:

- Give you directions on medications, diet, activity and caring for yourself
- Schedule your follow-up visit for you with your care team in the outpatient clinic
- Make sure you have someone planning to pick you up by noon

Once You Leave

Your Attending Nurse will call you within two to three days to check how you are doing.

If you have any questions or concerns about your care at home, call the number given to you on your directions you get.

Cardiac Surgical Services Contact Information

Below are the different service areas for heart (cardiac) surgery. The building, floor, and phone number are listed for your convenience.

Cardiac Surgery Service Location and Phone

Outpatient Cardiac Surgery Clinic

Cox 6

617-724-0800

Cardiac Surgery Intensive Care Unit (CSICU)

Blake 8

617-724-4410

Cardiac Step-down Unit

Ellison 8

617-724-4810

Helpful Resources

For more information relating to your health, treatment plan, and support for you and your loved ones, visit the following websites.

Corrigan Minehan Heart Center Website

For more information on the Corrigan Minehan Heart Center at Massachusetts General Hospital, visit www.massgeneral.org/heartcenter

Care Pages

You can help keep your distant family members and other loved ones who are unable to visit you while you are at Mass General informed by setting up a blog at Care Pages.

Visit www.carepages.com/mgh to find out more.

Mended Hearts

Mended Hearts is an organization that provides peer support for heart patients.

Visit their site at www.mendedhearts.org

American Heart Association

The American Heart Association offers a lot of resources for both you and your loved ones.

Visit their site at www.americanheart.org

MASS Quitline (Massachusetts Tobacco Cessation and Prevention Program)

If you are trying to quit smoking or using tobacco, the MASS Quitline has counselors that can help.

Visit <http://makesmokinghistory.org/> or call 1-800-QUIT-NOW.

