Questions to Ask Before Surgery

salto health

Bring this with you. Circle the ones that matter to you and leave the rest.
Bring someone if you can, and ask them to write the answers down.
It is completely fine to ask a question twice.

THE SURGERY ITSELF

- [ ] What exactly are you removing, and why?
- [ ] What is the name of this operation? Can you write it down?
- [ ] What are you hoping to achieve with it?
- [ ] Are there alternatives to surgery in my case?
- [ ] How many of these do you do in a year?
- [ ] How long does the operation usually take?
- [ ] Will I need anything else afterward, like radiation or chemotherapy?

BEFORE THE DAY

- [ ] What do I need to do to prepare?
- [ ] Should I stop any medications or supplements, and when?
- [ ] When do I need to stop eating and drinking?
- [ ] Do I need any tests or appointments beforehand?
- [ ] Is there anything I should do to get stronger before surgery?
- [ ] Who do I call if I get sick before the date?

THE DAY ITSELF

- [ ] What time should I arrive, and where do I go?
- [ ] How long will I be there?
- [ ] Can someone stay with me? Where do they wait?
- [ ] Will I stay overnight, and for how many nights?
- [ ] What should I bring with me?
- [ ] Who will talk to my family afterward?

RECOVERY

- [ ] What will I feel like when I wake up?
- [ ] How will pain be managed?
- [ ] Will I have drains, stitches, or dressings? Who takes care of them?
- [ ] How long before I can drive, work, lift things, or exercise?
- [ ] What will I need at home, and should I get it beforehand?
- [ ] Will I need help at home? For how long?
- [ ] Will this change how my body looks or works, and for how long?

AFTER I AM HOME

- [ ] Which symptoms mean call right away, and which are expected?
- [ ] Who do I call after hours or on a weekend?
- [ ] When is my follow-up appointment?
- [ ] When will I get results, and how?
- [ ] Is there anything I should not do?

PRACTICAL

- [ ] Who can help me understand what insurance covers?
- [ ] Is there a financial counselor here?
- [ ] Do I need paperwork for work or for leave?
- [ ] Is there anyone who can help me plan for the recovery weeks?

NOTES

This is a list of questions to help you talk with your care team. It is not medical advice and it does not replace anything your doctors tell you. Your care team has the information that applies to your situation.