

The Night Before and Day of Your Admission

Your health

- If there have been any recent changes in your health please ensure that your surgeon, anaesthetist or Bowen nursing staff is advised at the earliest opportunity. For example, if you develop a cold, flu, infection, vomiting, diarrhoea, laceration, appearance of a skin infection or suffer an asthma attack prior to your admission to hospital you should let one of the above know as soon as possible as it may be necessary to postpone your operation.
- If you have been employed in a clinical care role, are a resident in a rest home or long term care facility or have been admitted to any other hospital in New Zealand or overseas in the 6 months preceding your admission then pre-admission laboratory screening will need to be carried out. If your specialist has not already discussed this with you, please phone your specialist's private rooms or Bowen Hospital nursing staff at the earliest opportunity.
- If you have been admitted to any hospital since last seeing your surgeon, please phone Bowen Hospital Ward Services Manager at the earliest opportunity.

The night before and on the day of your surgery:

- **Take extra care of your body.** Do not shave near where you will be having surgery. Shaving can irritate your skin and this may lead to infection. Please ensure you look after your skin prior to your admission. Cuts or abrasions may result in your surgery having to be delayed.
- **Keep warm.** Wear warm clothes to the hospital and, in cold weather, heat up the car before you get in. Keeping warm before surgery can lower your chance of getting an infection.
- Please shower and wash your hair prior to admission and put on freshly laundered clothing.

Do Not apply moisturisers or hair gel. Remove make-up, body piercings and jewellery. Make-up and moisturisers interfere with and, in some cases, block transmission of important operating-room equipment.

Report to the main reception at the Hospital entrance where you will then be taken to your bed and shown the Ward facilities. A nurse will discuss the admission process and any relevant medical information with you i.e. allergies, medications and medical history.

Your admission time is scheduled to allow for the admission process and aims to minimise your waiting time before you are escorted to theatre. You may require some other tests on admission if your observations, age or medical history warrant further investigations. This could be a chest x-ray, blood tests or an ECG which provides a record of the electrical activity in your heart.

Eating and Drinking Before Your Anaesthetic

If you are undergoing surgery, your stomach must be empty and therefore it is very important to ask your specialist whether you should fast (neither eat nor drink, which includes chewing gum and sweets) before admission, and from what time. Following are some general guidelines, but you will receive specific instructions from your specialist, which should be written on the Welcome to Bowen Hospital page. If your admission time is **on the day before** your surgery date (i.e. admit Monday for surgery Tuesday) you may eat or drink as normal unless specific instructions advising against this have been provided by your specialist.

Your nurse will then advise you on admission when to stop eating and drinking.

Adults and children over 2 years of age

Do not eat anything for 6 hours before your admission time. You may drink WATER freely up until 4 hours before your admission, then nothing more.

Children under 2 years

Cow's milk or formula may be taken up to 6 hours prior to admission time and breast milk up to 4 hours before admission. WATER only may be drunk up to 2 hours before admission.

Children

We encourage children to bring their favourite toys with them. A visit in advance of their admission is recommended so they will be familiar with the hospital when they are admitted.

If you are a parent or a caregiver, you may stay with your child overnight if you wish. Please arrange this with our admissions staff as soon as possible. A fee will apply.

In order to reduce separation anxiety in children, a parent or caregiver may stay with your child while he/she is anaesthetised, providing that both the surgeon and anaesthetist agree. Once your child is anaesthetised you will be shown back to your child's room.

Accommodation for Family and Visitors

It is possible, in some rooms, for a support person to stay overnight with you in your hospital room. However, this requires the agreement of the Clinical Nurse Manager on the ward and is subject to room availability. Please contact us before your admission to request this. There is an associated rooming-in fee.

Gardens

Our hospital is set in landscaped grounds, featuring attractive gardens and many native trees, which you and your visitors are welcome to enjoy.

Parking

Ample free parking is provided within our hospital grounds. Please note that Bowen Hospital accepts no responsibility for car security.

Patients' Meals

Our menus are carefully selected to provide you with a choice of meals each day. If you require a special diet please notify the nursing staff well in advance in order that the food services team can carry out your wishes.

Meals are served in your room at the following times:
Breakfast – 8am, Lunch – Midday, Dinner – 5.45pm (5pm weekends).

Smoke-Free Buildings

A smoke-free policy applies throughout the hospital.

Visitors

Your family and friends are always welcome. Please ask your visitors to avoid calling during meal times and ensure they leave by 9pm. If at any time during your stay you do not wish to see visitors or take phone calls, please inform your nurse.

We do ask that you show courtesy to other patients and nursing staff by limiting noise and the number of visitors present at any one time.

Meals for visitors are available on request. A separate charge will apply.

Visitors' Lounge

Our lounge provides a relaxing environment for visitors to spend time while waiting for patients during surgery and recovery. It is furnished with comfortable lounge chairs, and television.

Tea and coffee-making facilities are available.

Discharge

The discharge process is important because it ensures that your care is formally transferred from the hospital to your specialist and/or general practitioner.

The nursing staff will assist in the arrangements for your discharge, in consultation with you and your specialist. A discharge form will be completed by medical or nursing staff and will contain details of the procedure performed and instructions relating to it.

Please ensure that you see a member of the nursing staff before you leave the ward to ensure that all medical checks have been completed.

Overnight patients

If you have stayed overnight, we ask that you vacate your room by 10.00am on the day you are discharged, so please feel free to ask us to arrange your transport accordingly. If this is not possible or convenient, you are welcome to wait in any of the patient or visitor lounges. If you wish to remain in your room after 10.00am on the day you are leaving, please discuss this with the Clinical Nurse Manager the day before. This will depend on bed availability, and a late-discharge fee may apply. Should you wish to remain in hospital for a longer period to convalesce, the Ward Services Manager or Hospital Manager will be happy to discuss this option and the associated room rates with you.

Day patients

Your specialist will have given you some idea of how long you will need to stay after your operation.

Transport

You should not drive yourself home after discharge. Please arrange to be taken home by a relative or friend in a private car, or use a taxi (we recommend that you do not use public transport).

When you get home

You should arrange for a responsible adult to stay with you for 24 hours after you get home. We recommend that you rest and follow the instructions of your doctor and/or hospital staff.

In the first 24 hours following surgery, you should not

- drive a vehicle
- operate any machinery.

And you are advised not to

- make any important decisions
- sign any legal documents
- drink alcohol.

Follow-up

In most cases you will need to make a follow-up appointment with your specialist if an appointment has not already been arranged for you by our staff. This is usually done by ringing your specialist within a day or so of leaving the hospital. If you have any problems before that appointment please contact your specialist or general practitioner immediately.

At your request a member of our nursing staff may telephone you if possible a few days after you leave Bowen to see how you are and to answer any queries you might have. (This will be discussed with you during your admission process in the hospital and your consent to this process will be obtained).

Please ring your specialist or general practitioner if you require medical advice after your discharge.

