Waiting for a family member who is having surgery

Information for families, friends and caregivers in the Surgical Family Waiting Room

Your family member, friend or loved one is having surgery.

We know the thought of having surgery in our operating room, also known as the “OR”, may be mysterious and frightening.

This brochure can help you understand what happens in the operating room and what we do to keep your family member safe.
**We are “Partners in Care”**

At UHN, we make sure that your family member, friend or loved one is an active partner in their care. “Partners in Care” means that we respect the needs and wishes of our patients, their families and loved ones. We will work with you to build a positive relationship based on good communication.

**Who is part of your team?**

The OR team includes:

**Circulating Nurse**
- Makes sure the OR team has all it needs to care for your family member or loved one
- Keeps the OR organized and has all the equipment, medications and instruments needed
- Communicates with you about a “family visit” and lets you know when your family member or loved one is able to leave the OR

**Scrub Nurse**
- Helps the surgeon throughout the surgery and has all the sterile instruments needed

**Surgeon**
- A doctor with specialized training who does the surgery

**Anesthesiologist**
- A doctor with specialized education who helps to keep your family member asleep during their surgery

**Anesthesia Assistant**
- Respiratory assistants or nurses help the anesthesiologist put in monitoring lines for the surgery
Attendants
• Brings your family member into the OR and helps to get blood and other items for the team

Perfusionists
• A specialized team member who runs the heart-lung machine for heart surgeries and some lung surgeries

What is the OR list?
The OR list is a daily list of patients who will be having surgery. It has an estimated OR time when each surgery for the day will be completed.

The OR time includes:

✔ The amount of time it will take to get your family member or loved one ready for surgery

✔ The time it will take to do the surgery

✔ The time it will take for your family member or loved one to wake up and be taken to the Post Anesthesia Care Unit

What happens when your family member or loved one leaves the Preoperative Care Unit (POCU)?

When your family member or loved one is ready for surgery, the attendant and the circulating nurse will take your family member from the POCU to the OR. The circulating nurse will stay with your loved one and the OR team throughout the surgery.
Once they are in the OR, your family member or loved one will be put onto a bed and then many things will happen.

1. The anesthesiologist will put in intravenous (IV) and other monitoring lines (if this was not already done in the POCU). Your loved one will also have a breathing tube put in.

2. The anesthesiologist will give some medications to make your loved one stay asleep during the surgery.

3. The OR team will go over the Surgical Safety Checklist.

4. Everyone will help to position your family member’s body to make sure all parts of the body are supported during the surgery.

5. The team will assess your loved one's skin to make sure it does not get any breakdown while lying for such a long time. (You can help your family member change position after surgery to help with this too!)

6. The scrub nurse and circulating nurse will set up all the items and instruments that will be needed during the surgery.

7. The surgeon and the OR team will operate on your family member or loved one.

When will the circulating nurse update us?

The circulating nurse will come out of the OR to give you an update as soon as it is safe to do so.

- The nurse can only leave the OR when another nurse arrives and if it is not too busy. The OR team may need both nurses in the OR at certain times to give the best care for your family member.
• If the surgery is happening after hours (in the evening, during the night or on a weekend), it may be more difficult for the circulating nurse to leave the OR and update you.

We understand that you are worried about your loved one, so the nurse will try to come out to give you an update as soon as possible.

**Safety in the OR**

The OR team has several things that they do to keep your family member or loved one safe while having their surgery.

• **Surgical safety checklist:** The OR team will talk about your loved one out loud. They will use the Surgical Safety Checklist to communicate everything about your family member.

• **Briefing:** Right when your family member enters the OR, the team makes sure we talk about and agree on everything that will happen during the surgery.

• **Time Out:** Before the surgery begins, the team will stop and review the surgery plan again, such as the side of the body for the surgery. This will be talked about out loud.

• **Debriefing:** Before your family member leaves the OR, the team will talk about what happened during the surgery and where your loved one will go after surgery.

The team will make sure that all surgical instruments, sponges and small items have been counted and taken care of.
Who can I talk to if I have questions?

Surgical Waiting Room volunteers help families communicate with the OR staff. They help provide updates to the family by keeping in touch with the OR front desk. An OR team member will try their best to come out and answer questions. The volunteers can help to direct you when the surgery is over.

In the evening and on weekends family and friends can find information at the front desk of the surgical waiting room.