



Preparing for Your Surgery

Hospital Surgery Guide | Valley Medical Center

Andrew L. Merritt, MD

Orthopedic Surgeon

Sports Knee Surgery | Anterior Hip, Total & Partial Knee Replacement

Proliance Orthopedic Associates

This packet belongs to:

Patient: _____

Procedure: _____

Surgery date: _____ Arrival time: _____

Questions? We are here to help.

Dr. Merritt's clinic team (Medical Assistant: Jessica T): 425-656-5060

Valley Medical Center main operator: 425-690-1000 | Preregistration: 425-690-3643

Patient education, recovery guides & videos: merrittsurgery.com

BEFORE YOUR SURGERY

Some of Dr. Merritt's surgeries are performed at Valley Medical Center in Renton rather than at the surgery center. The hospital's process is a little different, so this guide walks you through what to expect before, during, and after your operation, whether you are going home the same day (outpatient) or staying overnight (inpatient).

When Your Surgery Is Scheduled

Shortly after your surgery is scheduled, Valley Medical Center's preregistration team will call you to collect your full legal name, mailing address and phone number, employment information, emergency contact, and insurance details (ID numbers and claims address).

If you have not heard from preregistration within 5 business days of scheduling, call 425-690-3643.

Preoperative Appointment (STAR Clinic)

The hospital's Surgical Testing and Registration (STAR) clinic handles your preoperative visit. A preoperative appointment is:

- **Required** for all inpatient surgery.
- **Required** for outpatient surgery if you are age 60 or older.
- Optional if your procedure is done under local anesthetic only.

Bring all paperwork from Dr. Merritt's office to this appointment.

Visit With the Preoperative Liaison Nurse

Most patients are admitted the morning of surgery, so this visit happens before admission. The nurse will complete a nursing assessment interview and a basic physical exam, answer your questions, arrange an EKG and any required lab tests, and review your pre- and post-op care instructions.

Bring a list of ALL medications you take, with dosages, including prescriptions, over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and supplements.

Eating and Drinking (NPO)

- Do not eat or drink anything, **including water**, after midnight the night before surgery, unless Dr. Merritt or your preoperative nurse gives you different instructions.
- Children under age 2 may eat and drink until midnight; after midnight, only water or apple juice, and stop all fluids 6 hours before the scheduled surgery time.

Your Medications

- Blood pressure, seizure, heart, and asthma medications: take as usual with a small sip of water.
- Ask Dr. Merritt's office or the preoperative nurse about any other prescription drugs.
- If you take insulin, check with your doctor about your dose before surgery.
- Over-the-counter medicines such as aspirin and ibuprofen: check with your doctor about whether and when to stop them.

The Day of Surgery

- Do not wear contact lenses, makeup, lotions, powders, or perfume.
- Dentures, eyeglasses, contact lenses, hearing aids, and jewelry will be removed and kept safe before you go into the operating room.
- You will sign a Consent to Care form and a Financial Responsibility form. A parent or legal guardian must sign for patients under 18.

Your scheduled surgery time is an estimate. The actual time depends on the cases before yours and on emergencies, which are given priority. Give the hospital a phone number where you can be reached so they can tell you about any schedule changes.

ANESTHESIA

Anesthesia at Valley Medical Center is provided by Valley Anesthesia Associates, the same physician group that cares for patients at the surgery center. Your anesthesiologist, in consultation with Dr. Merritt, will recommend the best type of anesthesia for your operation and your health. For most of Dr. Merritt's hip and knee surgeries, this is a spinal or regional nerve block combined with sedation.

Types of Anesthesia

- **General anesthesia:** medications are given through your IV and you breathe a mixture of anesthetic gases. You are fully asleep and unaware of the operation.
- **Regional anesthesia:** medication is injected around the main nerves to the surgical area to make it numb. Numbness usually lasts 1 to 4 hours for outpatient procedures and 2 to 6 hours for major surgery. Regional anesthesia is often combined with sedation so you rest comfortably.
- **Local anesthesia:** medication is injected just under the skin to numb a small area.
- **Topical anesthesia:** medication applied to a mucous membrane, used for some nose, throat, or bladder procedures.

Whatever type you receive, your anesthesia team monitors your heart rate, blood pressure, oxygen level, and breathing continuously throughout surgery with specialized equipment.

Your Anesthesia Team

In the operating room you will be cared for by Dr. Merritt, a surgical assistant, an anesthesiologist, a nurse anesthetist, an operating room nurse, and surgical technicians. An IV will be placed in a vein in your hand or forearm for fluids and medications. Operating rooms are kept cool; ask for a warm blanket at any time.

Questions About Anesthesia

Valley Anesthesia Associates can answer questions about your anesthetic, insurance, and billing at **425-251-5180** or online at **valleyanesthesia.org**.

Common Questions

Will I have side effects? As anesthesia wears off you may notice blurry vision, dry mouth, nausea, chills, or pain. These are common and temporary. Tell your recovery nurse right away so they can treat them.

Can I have someone with me? A responsible adult must drive you home after any anesthesia or sedation. A taxi or rideshare alone is not acceptable. For the first 24 hours, do not drive, drink alcohol, sign legal documents, make important decisions, or operate equipment that could be dangerous.

INPATIENT SURGERY

If Dr. Merritt has planned for you to stay in the hospital after surgery, here is what to expect from the morning you arrive until you are ready to go home.

The Morning of Your Surgery

What to bring:

- A comfortable bathrobe, slippers, and pajamas.
- Personal toiletries.
- Your current medications, clearly labeled in their pharmacy bottles.
- A small amount of cash for incidentals.
- Any walker, crutches, or brace Dr. Merritt's office asked you to obtain.

Leave at home: valuables, watches, jewelry, and credit cards.

Arrival: have your driver drop you off at the hospital's main entrance and check in at the Surgery Admitting desk. Parking is free in Garage G (under the South Tower), Garages C and D, and the surrounding lots.

Pre-op medication: you may be given medicine before surgery that causes drowsiness and a dry mouth. Once you have received it, stay in bed with the side rails up and call your nurse if you need anything.

In the Recovery Room (PACU)

After surgery you go to the Post-Anesthesia Care Unit, where a nurse watches you closely as the anesthesia wears off and checks your dressing, blood pressure, IV, and any catheter or drainage tubes. Blurry vision, dry mouth, nausea, chills, and pain are common at this stage. Do not hesitate to ask for pain or nausea medication. Most patients move from the PACU to their hospital room within about 3 hours, as decided by the anesthesiologist.

Your Recovery on the Hospital Floor

- **Pain:** some pain after surgery is unavoidable, but it can be controlled with pills, injections, or IV medication. Tell your nurse when pain is getting worse; do not wait until it is unbearable.
- **Nausea:** turn your head to one side and call your nurse right away.
- **Deep breathing:** use your incentive spirometer regularly without waiting to be reminded. Deep breathing helps prevent pneumonia and improves circulation.
- **Coughing:** if you need to cough, hold a pillow firmly over your incision (push in and up) to splint it. Your nurse will show you how.
- **Activity:** even small movements help. Turn gently in bed and move your arms and legs often. Walking gets every body system going again. **Always get help the first time you get out of bed.**
- **Eating and drinking:** your digestive system is sluggish after surgery, so you will progress from IV fluids to liquids to solid food. Your urine output may be measured, and a catheter is sometimes used.

Going Home From the Hospital

Discharge planning starts the day you are admitted. Before you leave, arrange a ride home and a ride to your first follow-up visit with Dr. Merritt, and check whether your insurance covers home nursing visits, Meals on Wheels, or other services if you may need them. If you think you will need help at home, tell your nurse as soon as possible. At discharge, your doctor and nurse will give you specific written care instructions and answer your questions.

OUTPATIENT (SAME-DAY) SURGERY

Most of Dr. Merritt's hospital patients go home the same day. Here is what to expect.

The Day Before Surgery

A preoperative nurse will call you to review your health history, confirm your arrival time, and answer your questions.

The Day of Surgery

- **Arrange a responsible adult to drive you home** and stay with you. A taxi or rideshare alone is not enough, and your surgery may be cancelled if you do not have a ride.

- Bathe or shower in the morning and remove all makeup.
- Wear clean, comfortable, loose clothing that fits over bulky bandages or a brace.
- Leave watches, jewelry, and credit cards at home.
- Leave young children at home. Patients under 18 must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian, who will sign forms and speak with the anesthesiologist.

Bring with you:

- A list of your current prescription medications.
- Any reports, X-rays, or papers from Dr. Merritt's office.
- Your insurance card, prescription card, and photo ID.
- Crutches, a walker, or a brace if one was ordered for you. Crutches can be purchased or rented from the Prescription Pad Pharmacy at the hospital (North: 425-690-3551, South: 425-690-3552).
- For children: a favorite toy or blanket.

Your Arrival

Arrive **1 to 1½ hours before your scheduled surgery time**, or as instructed by the preoperative nurse. Please do not be late. Have your driver drop you off at the hospital's front main entrance. Parking is free in Garage G (under the South Tower), Garages C and D, and the surrounding lots.

After Your Surgery

You will wake up in the Post-Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU) and then move to a Phase II recovery area, where one visitor at a time may join you (both parents may be with a child). When you are stable and comfortable, you will be discharged home. From check-in to discharge usually takes **2 to 6 hours**.

Your Care at Home

You will receive written discharge instructions. For the **first 24 hours**:

- Take only the medications prescribed or approved for you.
- Start with liquids for the first 6 hours, then progress to your regular diet as tolerated.
- Have a responsible adult stay with you overnight, and get plenty of rest.
- Do **not** drive or take public transportation alone, drink alcohol, sign legal documents, make important decisions, or operate equipment that could be dangerous.

If you had only local or topical anesthesia, you may return to normal activities except those Dr. Merritt has restricted.

A Surgical Services nurse will call you 1 to 2 days after surgery to see how you are doing. In the meantime, call Dr. Merritt's office at 425-656-5060 with any questions or concerns.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Where to Go

Valley Medical Center

400 S. 43rd Street, Renton, WA 98055

Surgery check-in: main entrance, Surgery Admitting desk

Free parking: Garage G (South Tower underground), Garages C and D, and surrounding lots

Dr. Merritt's Clinic – Proliance Orthopedic Associates

4011 Talbot Road South, Suite 300, Renton, WA 98055 (across Talbot Road from the hospital)

Additional clinic locations in Covington, Maple Valley, and Auburn (Lakeland Hills)

Important Phone Numbers

Who to call	Number
Dr. Merritt's clinic (Proliance Orthopedic Associates)	425-656-5060
Valley Medical Center main operator	425-690-1000
Preregistration	425-690-3643
Valley Anesthesia Associates	425-251-5180
Prescription Pad Pharmacy (North / South)	425-690-3551 / 425-690-3552
Emergency	Call 9-1-1

Follow-Up With Dr. Merritt

Dr. Merritt typically sees patients about 2 weeks after surgery and again at 6 to 8 weeks. Please call the clinic to confirm your post-op appointment if one has not already been scheduled.

Your post-op appointment: _____

Recovery Resources

Dr. Merritt's website, **merrittsurgery.com**, has recovery guides, exercise programs, and videos for each of the procedures he performs. Review the guide for your surgery before your operation.

Please call Dr. Merritt's office right away at 425-656-5060 if you have a fever over 101°F, redness or drainage from your incision, calf pain or swelling, chest pain or shortness of breath, or pain that is not controlled by your medications. For a life-threatening emergency, call 9-1-1.

This guide is adapted for Dr. Merritt's patients from Valley Medical Center's "Your Guide to Surgery" (valleymed.org). Hospital policies and phone numbers may change; when in doubt, call the number listed.